Encounter

July 1973 35p

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LAW AND ORDER

John Wain
SATURDAY NIGHT OUT

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Watergate

The long trek back to
CIVILITY
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Short story

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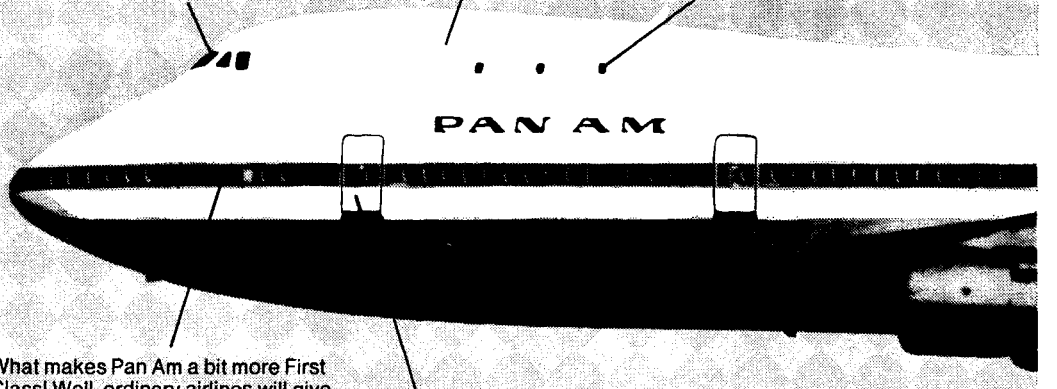

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Encounter

JULY 1973

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SWING HIGH, SWING LOW 3 *John Wain*
THE FUTURE OF LAW & ORDER 13 *Alvin Toffler*
THE FAIR ONES *(story)* 24 *Renzo Rosso*
THE RECOVERY OF CIVILITY 31 *Ferdinand Mount*
COLUMN 44 *R*

FILM

FANTASIA 47 *John Weightman*

POETRY

Edwin Brock 12, *Pamela Lewis* 30, *D. J. Enright* 43, *John Gurney* 49, *Derek Mahon* 92

SPECIAL BOOK SECTION: LITERATURE & CRITICISM

THE TOUCH OF A VANISHED HAND 51 *John Bayley*
WORD-WORLD 55 *Martin Dodsworth*
BEYOND LITERATURE 61 *Laurence Lerner*
LIFE'S DIVISIONS 65 *Bernard Bergonzi*
LARKS & THEORIES 68 *Emrys Jones*
UNHAPPY FAMILIES ARE ALL ALIKE 71 *Malcolm Bradbury*
THE CHARACTERS OF ARTIFICE 74 *Peter Conrad*
GLOBAL CHARADES 78 *Jonathan Raban*

EAST & WEST

A VOICE IN THE SILENCE 84 *Milovan Djilas*

DOCUMENTS

On Freedom and Professor Eysenck's Nose (Bernard Levin) 34

LETTERS 93

IN THE MARGIN

WHAT FIRE, WHICH LAKE? 94 *M.J.L.*

AUTHORS 96

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Inscriptions

Poems 1967-72

Anthony Thwaite

Many of the poems in Anthony Thwaite's new book have as their origin the records of the past: an entry in an eighteenth-century parish register, a fragment by an ancient voyager, a verse dedicated to his arrowhead by an early Japanese poet. The sense of the past dominates the collection, but the poems are nonetheless wholly relevant to our own time, and have an unmistakable resonance and power.
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David Gallagher

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F.W. Bateson

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A Study in Bristol

Anthony H. Richmond

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Christopher Bagley

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£2 paper covers 90p

Oxford University Press

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John Wain

Swing High, Swing Low

Reflections on a Saturday Night Out

ONE EVENING, a few weeks ago, I had an interesting and disturbing experience. I saw the features of the young people of my country, lying in front of me like a new-minted coin. The sight filled me with exhilaration. Then I turned the coin over and saw the other side, and my mind sank into revulsion and discouragement. I have been trying to fit the two feelings together, ever since, and not succeeding.

It began with an invitation to take part in an evening of poetry and music, in aid of something-or-other. I was to read from my own work in two fifteen-minute stretches, and that was to be the poetry. All the rest, in various ways, made up the music. There were groups of this and groups of that, a classical guitarist, and a team (or whatever is the collective term) of Morris Men.

It was not exactly an unqualified success, this evening. The building in which it took place was evidently undergoing reconstruction; the walls were stripped to the bare plaster, steel scaffolding was everywhere, there was a damp reek like that inside a railway tunnel. The central heating was disconnected; the naked light-bulbs shed a forlorn light. The audience had, understandably, stayed away in large numbers. But the organisers of the event, and the musicians, and the dancers, and in the end even I, imported a *bonhomie* which made the atmosphere cheerful and positive in spite of these drawbacks. Most of the "groups" played the conventional folkish mixture, now genuflecting towards "blue grass", now to rhythm and blues, yet again towards the Beatles. There seemed to be a fair number of North Americans among these performers. One of them, I was glad to see, acted as fiddler for the Morris Men as they stamped and gyrated their English village dances. It made me feel that some kind of circle had joined itself up; the country music in which the young man had doubtless found his first interest had been taken there by Elizabethan voyagers, had been planted, grown, born its 20th-century fruit in such devotees as himself, and here he was fiddling away, back where it all started. The Morris Men, strongly-built chaps who leapt and thundered until the planks of the floor seemed likely to need renewing along with the rest of the building, were straight 1970s types, altogether different from the rather wilting, garden-suburb kind of people one used to associate with "country dances."

I COULD GO ON, but perhaps I have written enough to establish that these young people gave, collectively, a very cheering impression: of good humour, of talent, of sheer willingness to be happy, to make their own enjoyment instead of sitting back and waiting to have it made for them, and to communicate it to others. Apart from the classical guitarist, who was a professional musician (and impressive), everyone there was a spare-time performer. Those who were not very good knew themselves to be not very good, and those who were good knew that there were others still better. One felt that, without applying high standards to one another, they knew that high standards existed. They were kindly, and generous, and participating.

THE END OF THE CONCERT found me standing on the pavement with a few friends, warmed and uplifted by the music and the company though chilled by the dank air and with my throat burnt from the whisky I had had to gulp, out of a paper cup, to give myself the illusion of bodily heat. My friends and I were, suddenly, hungry, and we wanted to eat together rather than disperse to our homes. But, in an English provincial town, getting on for midnight, the restaurants are mostly closed. So we went to the only eating-place we could think of that never shuts its doors at all: a cafeteria-cum-grill forming

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part of a motel on the ring-road just outside the town. Here, we were no longer in provincial England but in the thinly-spread, featureless, international carpet of urbanisation which the motor-car unrolls wherever it goes. An immense car park, a vague frieze of low-profile buildings where people sleep, and the cafeteria. We took our trays, collected some quite good-looking bacon and eggs and fried potatoes and coffee, and went to a table. Then, I began to look around. And at once I realised that the bright coin I had seen earlier in the evening had been flipped over and was showing its tarnished underside.

I had already noticed, while we were being served, that the aisle down which the customers had to pass was bounded, on the side opposite the counter, by a wrought-iron screen which, though "ornamental", was nevertheless solid enough to make a useful crash-barrier for the staff if anyone started throwing anything. I also saw an obvious security man, in uniform, standing in a corner surveying the scene. Not that the clientèle, as of that moment, looked dangerous. Mindlessness, rather than violence, was the keynote.

Everyone present (except myself and my friends) was young. I saw no one who looked more than twenty-five, and most were well under twenty. One looked in vain, however, for the pleasing physical characteristics of youth: the bright eyes, the bloom on the skin, the alert faces and restless movements. This crowd seemed half-alive. Only the immaturity in the faces advertised them as young. As I ate and drank and looked round me, the scene began to take on the qualities of a nightmare. Everywhere I looked I saw low foreheads, small eyes, potato noses, faces that I would have called Neanderthal except that Neanderthal man seems to me to have had a dignity and a repose in his features that were wanting in those I saw.

At this point there came a small diversion. The plate-glass doors were quickly and silently pushed open and two policemen appeared, wearing flat caps with black-and-white check bands. A youth who was sitting at a nearby table, quietly drinking a cup of coffee, was abruptly stood on his feet and marched out through the doors into the night. As far as I could tell, no words were exchanged. It did not appear that the constables ill-treated the young man in any way; some time later, when we left, they were standing in the car-park with him, apparently deep in conversation. Doubtless they needed some information which they thought he could probably give them, and this was their method of getting it. All the same, the sudden, silent, practised swoop, the wordless frog-march through the door, struck me as slightly unnerving. It was impossible to imagine its happening in the place I had been in earlier in the evening. For one thing, if a member of that audience had been suddenly walked outside by two policemen, everyone would have crowded round to know the reason why. Here, it passed virtually unremarked. A good many of those present simply did not see it happen; those who did, paid no special attention. It seemed to me likely that the police were very much in the habit of dropping in and keeping an eye on this place, at any rate on a Saturday night. (On ordinary week-nights, I would expect to find no one here but taciturn, tired motorists, travelling salesmen and the like, getting a little food and sleep.)

A FEW MINUTES LATER, engines roared to a stop outside and a posse of motor-cyclists entered. Whether they were Hell's Angels, or members of some other denomination or of none, I do not know. But they wore the uniform of the tribe—leather jackets with metal studs, boots, matted hair newly released from helmets. Our table was just inside the glass wall separating the restaurant from the foyer, in which stood a row of slot-machines. As I watched, one of the cyclists approached a slot-machine and started it working. The distance between us was no more than ten feet, and I studied him through the glass for several minutes. He had heavy, Mongolian features with dark button eyes; his jacket was so thickly sewn with studs that the leather was completely hidden and one saw nothing but the studs. A film director could have put him straight into a scene depicting the hordes of Ghengiz Khan, without the need of a visit to the make-up department. He was behaving in a perfectly peaceable manner, causing no more disturbance than I was myself. Yet, in appearance, he was a warrior, girded for combat. Everyone dresses in order to express something; our clothes, as well as keeping us warm, announce to the world what manner of people we take ourselves to be, or would like to be taken to be. In view of this simple, obvious fact, disputed by nobody, it seems worth asking why this young citizen of mid-20th-century England should dress, in his leisure hours, so as to project himself as a fierce, implacable invader from the steppes.

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And once the questions begin, they go on. Why the low intelligence, the lack-lustre expressions? Why the aimlessness, the boredom? And if this was the plight of the young, why were their elders doing nothing about it? As the hands of the clock moved to midnight, I wondered whether the parents of these children were asleep in bed, and if so whether they were sleeping soundly, well satisfied with themselves. Next to us, four children sat at a table; the eldest looked barely sixteen; all were smoking. Do they smoke at home? If so, what price "government health warnings" on the side of the fag-packets?

BY THIS TIME, most readers (assuming they have read this far) will be reacting in one of two ways. Either they will be loathing me as a snob, a complacent social reactionary who approves of the clean middle-class kids who are being educated for professions and go in for things like country dancing, and disdains the proles with their motor-bikes and juke-boxes; or they will be raising their eyebrows at my naïveté and obviousness. What's all the fuss about? Has this man just discovered that society is divided into those who make it and those who don't make it? The kids in the cafeteria at midnight on a Saturday are the failures, the drop-outs, the ones without the intelligence to get beyond secondary-modern schooling and mostly unable to keep up even with that, the ones who drift into dead-end jobs, who come from housing estates (at best) and slums (at worst), crushed into dwellings where the only room that is warmed and lighted is always quacking away with commercial TV programmes, who never see anyone reading a book. That's why they don't bat an eyelid when they see one of their number picked up by the police; they live in that kind of relationship with officialdom; enforcement of the law is the only face society shows them. They are the kind of "fans" who slash train seats if their team loses; all the pilfering and the petty crime is laid at their door, and usually rightly, because what else have they got to occupy them?

Well, of course I know all this. Intellectually, I always have known it. But when you see the thing on the hoof, as distinct from reading tables of figures or the reports of social workers, when in one single evening you are pitchforked right in, first among the social goodies and then among the social baddies, the result is that you try to get beyond mere admiration and pity, mere approval and disapproval. You try, with whatever resources of thinking and feeling that may be at your disposal, to confront the root of the matter, the tragedy of the modern totally-organised society.

NOW THAT THE last traces of the Christian world-view have just about disappeared, we live in a society where materialism has triumphed, and its triumph is total. There is good materialism and there is bad materialism, but beyond materialism there is nothing.

Good materialism (to begin at the top) involves things like social justice, health, and the protection of the environment. During the whole of the period since World War II, the positive values of Western society have embodied themselves in good materialism. Particularly in the ideal of equal opportunity. All advantages are to some extent self-perpetuating. If a man can afford a comfortable home where peace and privacy are not out of the question, then his children grow up in these surroundings and are better able to think solidly and feel constructively than the children of the man with no material advantages. The scholarship-ladder and the rest of the *carrière ouverte aux talents* had been rigged up by the 1930s, but any time before 1939 it took an exceptionally gifted individual, with energy and willpower as well as intelligence, to drag himself up from a background of poverty and disadvantage.

When I think back to my own schooldays, in a provincial grammar-school, I remember how the boys from very poor homes were different from the rest of us. Such boys always went one way or the other. Either they seemed to make some inner gesture of refusal, or they wolfed what was set before them with a bright, pathetic voracity. Some of them, confronted with the opportunity to climb up into the middle class, simply declined it. They stayed on at school, as inconspicuously as possible, until they had got through the old School Leaving Certificate (five passes at what would now be called O-level), and then left immediately and took clerking jobs which could be seen as a step up from being manual workers like their fathers, but put no unbridgable gulf between them and their home base of social habits and neighbourhood relationships. It was, I thought then and think now, a perfectly intelligible choice. The other sort were the ambitious, the restless and unhappy, the incessant workers. Life to them was a series of hurdles, each slightly

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higher than the one before, and there was never a moment to lose. As it happens, I have lost sight of all the boys I knew at school who belonged to either of these categories. I have plenty of friends left from my schooldays, but they are all men of more or less my own kind, coming from a background which, modest enough in terms of social class, was not beset by the fear of want. We had no whip to drive us over the hurdles; "upward social mobility" was not a pressing need in our lives. If I had kept in touch with any of the boys who came from the poorest homes, I would expect to find that the non-ambitious ones had adjusted to life more successfully than the ambitious. I would expect to find that the compulsive getters-on were mostly psychic cripples. But that, admittedly, is a guess and nothing more.

IT TOOK, AS I SAY, exceptional effort and exceptional gifts, in those comparatively recent days, to pull oneself up from the lower working class. It could be done, but the price that had to be paid was monstrous. Those clever, ambitious boys had no time to enjoy their boyhood; all the years in which they should have had the joy of young animals, discovering the surface of the earth, were given to grind, grind, grind, early and late. Then came the Education Act of 1944, and in its wake Act after Act, measure after measure, expansion after expansion. One of the good results of the War (good not for those who were killed or maimed in it but for us, the survivors) was that the demand for social justice could no longer be simply ignored. The English people had made so many sacrifices, shown such courage and endurance, that it was impossible for their masters to go on treating them merely as a sullen rabble who if pampered might grow restive and dangerous. As Britain had been first into the industrial era, with its attendant terrible suffering and spoliation, so it was first into the welfare era. Free medical treatment! Free dental treatment! We forget, so quickly does time go by, what a revelation these things were to people already in middle age.

A personal vignette. My father was a dentist. The vast majority of his patients were working-class, who all through the inter-War years had to count their pennies, and naturally dental treatment came very low on the list of priorities. Preventive dentistry hardly entered into their scheme of things; as long as their teeth did not ache, they left them alone, and when they did start to ache it was "pull 'em out and give me a set of nice white false ones." This was generally done on credit, so that my father had to give almost as much attention to debt-collecting as he did to dentistry. Then came the day in 1948 when the Health Service went into operation. On the first morning, ten minutes before the surgery opened, my father assembled his staff and said, "We shall have a new system of registration. The first person who comes in this morning will be Number 1. After that, however many times that person comes back for treatment, they will always be Number 1. And so on." The total figure of patients on the books thus represented not single treatments but people, many of whom came back time and time again. Well, they started in 1948 with Number 1, and on the day of my father's retirement, ten years later, the figure stood at 17,396.

This was the kind of upsurge that resulted from the new welfare arrangements. If one dentist was coping with that kind of demand, we can guess at the dimensions of the national increase. The ill, the poor, came out of their holes and corners to consult doctors, dentists, opticians, physiotherapists, now that at last they could do so without disgorging their last few shillings, and without being "panel patients", treated like dirt and made to wait for hours in draughty corridors every time they took their aches and pains to the hospital on "clinic day."

Conclusion of the foregoing (as Flann O'Brien would say). I put it in because it happened to encapsulate the form in which the National Health Service, and the welfare era generally, impinged on my own consciousness.

SINCE 1945, the whole thrust of our official political philosophy has been towards the goal of lessening, sometimes actually removing, the difficulties that beset the clever and industrious person who wanted to rise in the world. Our aim, consistently pursued and in a fair number of cases actually achieved, has been to lift from the poor the burdens and handicaps that had always kept them poor: malnutrition, slum housing, inadequate schooling. And while our officialdom has been toiling away in these sectors, the rest of us have given enthusiastic support along our own particular lines. The social handicaps of poverty, the shabby clothes and provincial accents, have been transformed overnight into social advantages. The well-fed and carefully-schooled offspring of the successful, today and for years past, dress in tattered, usually dirty, clothes and study

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to acquire glottal stops and proletarian diphthongs as earnestly as the poorest scholarship boy used to try to "get rid of his accent." The world that awaits a clever and ambitious boy or girl, born into the poorest home in the land, is a good deal brighter than it was in the 1920s, when my generation were born.

Quite so. But what does the world look like if you are poor but *not* clever, *not* ambitious? If you dream about having money, power, being looked up to and admired, but in practice can't climb up even the lowest rung of the ladder, have no prospect of ever getting into a well-paid job, and at the age of sixteen see yourself clearly as a drop-out, something flawed, inadequate, spewed out by the machine as unusable?

This is what I read in the eyes of those children at the all-night cafeteria. In all those vacuous faces there was something closed, secret, unreachable: the self in its shell of resentment. All around them roared the great machine of modern industrial life, pouring out from its cornucopia the material rewards of getting on—the cars, the flashy clothes, the jet-set holidays, the hi-fi and stereo. From babyhood, when they had first been dumped in front of the television set, they had been battered by advertising, using all the resources of clinical psychiatry to feed in its message "Get money and buy, get money and buy." But now they had grown up to the threshhold of what should have been maturity, and found that after all they could not get money and buy. They had been too bored to pay attention to their lessons, too stupid to pass their examinations, too alienated from society to regard their teachers as anything but policemen who happened not to have truncheons. Utterly unresponsive to ideas and information, coming from homes where the talk was of Bingo and the pools, they had been the defenceless prey of an enormous entertainment industry, ready to spend unlimited money in order to attract even more unlimited money, making overnight fortunes for kids who looked and behaved like the most unattractive and delinquent among themselves. If the lad in the studded jacket, the Ghengiz Khan warrior, had stood shoulder to shoulder with some young millionaire of the pop scene, no one could have told them apart. This is what we have given them. Human beings, the young of our own species, inhabiting the planet at the same time as ourselves, and we can do no better for them than to leave them in this morass! And suddenly, sitting in that cafeteria, my boyhood reading of *Brave New World* came back to me and I knew I was looking at the gamma-men.

"But what more can we do? We have made it easy for brains and determination to succeed: the way is open for them to improve their lot, what grievance can they have?"

Precisely, this is the tragic paradox. It is *because* we have come so close to the goal of equal opportunity, *because* we have made sure that no really gifted person stays among the gamma-men, that the plight of the hard core is so bleak.

FOR CONSIDER THE NATURE of industrial society. It depends, necessarily, on the factory worker. All "developed" countries would come to a standstill within twenty-four hours if a majority of its inhabitants were unwilling to work in factories. And the nature of factory work is, frankly, hellish. No one would work in a factory if he could possibly get out of it. On the other hand, if we all got out of it, there would be no wealth, no "productivity", no "rising standard of living", "expanding economy" and all the rest of the sacred cows. So a modern industrial country is, by definition, one that has to keep going by condemning its less fortunate citizens to spend their lives in surroundings that the more fortunate ones take care never to go near.

"But hasn't this always been the case? Hewers of wood and drawers of water, and all that?"

Hardly. Industrialism altered everything. In traditional society, the vast bulk of humanity tilled the earth, looked after animals, or were in one way or another concerned in handicrafts. These occupations, though often narrow and repetitive, were not as soul-destroying as factory work. It is true that a majority of the population were very poor, but this poverty did not necessarily result from the nature of their work. It resulted from social injustice. The 19th-century farm labourer was poor and hungry in order that other people might amass fortunes, not because ploughing and hoeing and weeding and milking cows do not produce adequate returns. Nor are these activities, in themselves, degrading to human beings. They become degrading when they are carried on for inhumanly long hours, by people living in tumbledown cottages, undernourished and falling victim to rheumatism and tuberculosis. Improve the conditions of any outdoor worker, especially the rural worker, and you give him a reasonably happy life. But once industrialism enters the scene, this is no longer the

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case. The factory worker, however much money he takes home, knows that his most precious possession—his life—is being filched from him, week by week. He also knows that the wealth he is producing is far greater than the wealth produced by the old husbandman or craftsman. Of course his wages are incomparably higher than theirs, but however much money comes to him, he knows that far the biggest share of it is going to other people—and this holds equally true whether he lives under "Capitalism", or under that tightly-reined system of state capitalism which we call "Communism", though what is common or communal about it, except drabness and fear, I don't know, since Communist societies work by means of a pyramid of privileges enforced by mental and physical cruelty.

There is another difference between a traditional, rural-based society and a modern industrial one. In the traditional society, it was so difficult for a working man to haul himself out of the working class that most people did not even try. You were born into a certain situation and you stayed in that situation. And while this was obviously unjust, it had one healthy feature. Intelligence and character were more or less evenly distributed over the entire populace. Cobblers, weavers, craftsmen, sailors, farm workers, could be and often were shrewd, sagacious, ironic. The consequences of this were enormously far-reaching. The English language, to take one obvious example, would not have been the rich, powerful and yet sensitive instrument it is, had not the ordinary user of English, the speaker who coined images and metaphors not from books but from his or her own trade or sphere of life, been gifted with a good ear for language, a sharp, pithy, ironic turn of phrase. But as the manual-working class is drained by the recruitment of its brighter members, generation after generation, into the technical or executive middle class, we arrive at a situation in which there are no picturesque or laconically apt turns of speech coming from men who work with their hands. The uneducated become less and less articulate, resorting more and more to grunts and slurs, and the language is increasingly at the mercy of people who sit at desks and shuffle papers about.

I CAN IMAGINE, of course, many people to whom this last problem would not count as a serious problem at all; people to whom it makes no difference whether they speak a bright, fresh, supple language or a dead jargon, so long as their needs for shelter, warmth, and various satisfactions are met. And I would not argue myself blue in the face trying to alter such people. If language deteriorates, literature is bound to deteriorate with it. But, once again, there are many people, in important decision-making areas of our society, who would simply not notice if literature deteriorated, or died out altogether for that matter. (How many of the men responsible for *Concorde*, for instance, ever sit down and read a poem?)

But there are other consequences, apart from the linguistic, if the lowest ranks of a society are going to be where they are through pure and simple inability to make use of their opportunities to go higher. One, and perhaps the least serious, is that life in all areas of the society becomes cumbrous, slow, irritating. I had experience of this in the Soviet Union, where, because of the relentless drive for an efficient technology, everyone with any intelligence has been gathered up into the space programme, or the arms programme, or the teaching industry. The ones who are left, to fill jobs like waiting in restaurants or serving behind post-office counters, struck me as very poor human material, unteachable, slow, confused. The result is that simple actions like sending a parcel through the post or buying a ticket for a short railway journey mushroom into fearsome tasks which are apt to consume a whole morning. The resulting frustration and ill-will spreads like spilt glue throughout the whole social scene.

BUT WORSE, FAR WORSE, than the inefficiency is the bone-cancer of resentment that such a stratification induces. These people, cast by their own shortcomings in the permanent role of gamma-men, are condemned throughout life to carry the dirty end of the stick. In a traditional society, there might well be resentment at injustice. But the resentment could be mitigated by idealism and hope. It was always possible—as the eloquent early Socialists could persuasively demonstrate—to re-shape society so as to get rid of the injustices. A man who knew himself too good for the work he was condemned to do could always dream of the day when he, or his children, would rise to a position which reflected the natural level of his abilities. But what happens now that all the clever and industrious have risen? Sullen rage and despair. The society is still unjust —only now the injustice is more ingrained, harder to isolate and attack. If it is unjust that intelligent

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and adaptable people should be condemned to dreary, dirty jobs because they were born in a certain social class, surely it is equally unjust that people who happen through no fault of their own to be stupid and retarded should be pegged down, hopelessly, in the lower reaches of the industrial inferno. The injustice is not of the same kind. But it is none the less real for that.

NOW, WHAT ARE WE to do about it? By "we" I mean us, the clever ones, the ones who have managed to avoid being put to work amid deafening noise in an environment that destroys our humanity.

The first step, I think, is to rid ourselves once and for all of any remaining vestige of the "can't-be-helped" attitude, that says, "If people are stupid and unteachable, very well, let them be bored and frustrated and miserable." This attitude, for those who had the necessary hardness to take it up, might have made some kind of sense in the days when productive work was a matter of skill. But in modern industrial society, productive work, of the kind that produces great wealth, is no longer the province of the skilful. The whole essence of industrial work, mass production, the standardisation of parts, the assembly line and the rest of it, is that the work-force need have no skill at all. Physical endurance, and the capacity to resist boredom, are all that are needed. It was this realisation that underlay American attitudes towards Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, those years of the wide-open door and the mass immigration from all the poorer parts of the Old World. The American attitude, as typified by Emma Lazarus's poem at the base of the Statue of Liberty, was that anybody and everybody was usable. As the first nation to shape itself consciously on the attitudes of industrialism (Britain had pioneered industrialism, but the obstinately feudal and rural nature of English attitudes prevented a wholesale psychological take-over), America was ready to welcome "the huddled masses," the drop-outs, the failures, the sick, the poor, the twisted, and make them into an effective work-force.

Our society, today, produces great wealth. In fact, it over-produces; behind all the frenzied calls for more and more growth, one senses the realisation that we are being stifled, pressed down, crushed out of shape, cut to pieces, by *things*, and we have already reached the point of hysteria at which the only remedy we can envisage is to produce more and more things. Still, for good or ill, modern industrial productivity is an obvious fact. Whether or not the society enjoys wealth, uses wealth constructively for happiness, distributes wealth fairly, the fact remains that the society *produces* wealth. And by whose agency? Doubtless in part by means of clever inventors, learned scientists, shrewd investors, etc., etc. But, fundamentally, the people who create this wealth are those who work in factories—including the gamma-men and gamma-women, gamma-boys and gamma-girls, stuck in their sterile and repetitive toil. If we could begin by getting it into our heads that our productivity, our power to create abundance, is just as much owing to these people as it is to the clever ones and the higher-ups, we could come more easily to the realisation that they deserve to share in the abundance that they produce. This would remove the psychological obstacle that still, at present, stands in the way of a saner distribution of incomes. For of course the factory worker, however unintelligent and unenlightened, deserves better of the society than many of those who automatically get more consideration and esteem. As I write, astronomical fortunes are piling up in the bank balances of people who are fortunate enough to own land. In some cases, the land in question was given to their ancestors by Charles II or whomever. They themselves have done nothing at all, except have the luck to be born with the right ancestors; they have contributed nothing, made nothing grow; yet on them we lavish enormous wealth, and all the things that go with wealth. If we can do this, surely we can raise the standard of living of the industrial workers who are actually keeping the whole laborious machine in motion?

"Is *that* your solution? Just another rise in wages?"

No, not directly in wages. More money in their pockets would do these people very little good. There are too many clever exploiters and parasites who would charm it out of them and leave them worse off than before, more cluttered with "consumer durables" but even less free and fulfilled. The money should be spent on things that give them solid benefit: more living-space, more grass and trees, better schools, better hospitals. Pamper them a little, even!—for all the pampering in the world won't bring them up to the level of the man who can make a million pounds just by letting a title deed slide across his desk. . . .

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AT THIS POINT IT MAY BE necessary to stop and argue with the person who claims that we have "done enough" for the under-privileged already, who can reel off the list of free services and benefits, who is ready with a comparison of the lot of the modern *Lumpenproletariat* with that of the Victorian slum-dweller (heaven *versus* hell). But to deal with this objection will not take long. It will merely be a matter of repeating what I have said already: that this phase of history is the first in which the chief means for producing enormous wealth is the un-gifted, the slow, the unteachable, the drop-outs. Just desert, worthiness, have nothing to do with it. However much we do for them, it will be nothing compared with what they do for us.

Notice, please, that I am unashamedly using the terms "we" and "they." I have been many times warned about this. There is a certain kind of egalitarian to whom the mere use of these terms is itself a guarantee of bad faith. To say that "we," the people with our hands on some modicum of decision-making power and some semblance of a social conscience, will do this and that for "them," the supine populace, too sunk in inertia and too banjaxed by advertising and the entertainment industry to think for themselves—this is to be the arch-villain, an "élitist," a paternalist and worse. Fortunately, I have given up caring for the arguments of this tribe. All they really mean is that "the masses" are *their* property, to be manipulated as *they* think fit, and of course there is no "we" or "they" in their vocabulary, except insofar as "they" means the government, the authorities, the "system," the police (oh, the police are "they" all right), "we" themselves and the groaning, oppressed millions who, unconsulted, are taken to be in agreement with them.

WE MIGHT AS WELL face the issue squarely. Our system—that is, the system we have permitted to come into being—that is, we ourselves—have created a class of gamma men, and we cannot shirk the responsibility for them. By sifting out all the brighter and more adaptable elements, we have left ourselves with a basic working class whose faces I saw the other night in that cafeteria. We have made it impossible, by the conditions of life that we have wished on them, for them to better their own lot. They are stuck with mindless jobs and dreary housing estates and traffic-choked highways and twanging pop music and a drooling, sensational press—and then we express pained surprise when they steal, and damage property, and beat old-age pensioners with iron bars to get a few coins out of their pockets.

The gamma-men *are* unattractive. We have made them so, or at least allowed them to become so without doing anything positive about it. Their behaviour *does* follow unattractive patterns. What have we done about it, except to heap large fortunes on the people who have provided them with the material for their fantasies of power and sex? If you take boys and girls from this kind of background, and spend millions on showing them films that glorify violence and are obsessed with lust and cruelty, this is what you will get. No matter what modish chatter can be employed to confuse and mask the issue, it is there for everyone to see: do this, and these consequences will follow.

We ought to set ourselves to lift, one by one, some of the worst burdens off the backs of these disadvantaged people. The first, in my estimation, is the burden of all those rich people who are getting richer all the time by purveying sick trash to them, fantasies that ruin their mental balance, obsessions that weight them further and further down into the mud. The second is the burden of overcrowding and poor housing. Once again, this is attributable to rich men who are intent on getting richer. If we have a government that lacks the guts to nationalise land, we must get rid of it and vote in one that has the guts. Nothing else will cure this sickness that is infecting and spoiling everything. If the buying and selling of land for private profit were stopped tomorrow, the feverish speculation in property would soon cure itself, inflation would slow down and we could all breathe again and get on with our lives.

The third burden that we should lift from the shoulders of the gamma-men is the burden of our own misfits and neurotics. The highly-organised and institutionalised life of the middle classes is doubtless revolting. All of us find that it needs substantial mitigation. Many people find it unendurable. It breeds in them a vengeful spirit of destructiveness, which they can only appease by identifying themselves with any and every movement that makes a virtue of hatred and destruction. Usually it is enough to talk, and sometimes shout, and spend one's days and nights in the company of other people talking and shouting along the same lines. The parlour revolutionary has been with us for a full decade now, and apart

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from being a paralysing bore he (and even more often, she) does no appreciable harm. But sometimes this itch to pull down, to break out, to kill and maim for their own sakes, is compulsively channelled into action. And then the two extremes meet: the radical from the prosperous background, dressing up in a £90 leather jacket to go out and destroy "the system," and the hoodlum from the slums, cut off from reality just as sharply, but by under-privilege instead of over-privilege.

Every murderous movement of the last dreadful decade has seen the two types in collaboration. The bourgeois drop-out can always spout the right phrases, and the rat-faced gunman who shoots an ambulance man in the back as he stoops to attend to an injured woman, or throws a bomb through the doorway of a crowded pub, has a licence to think himself a hero. Don't let us delude ourselves. No great nationalistic issue is needed, and certainly no burning grievance. If the delinquent kids living in my own neighbourhood, the ones who throw half-bricks through the windows of my house on dark nights, were told that they were heroes and that history would prove them right, and had bombs put into their hands instead of bricks, they would throw the bombs with as little compunction, as much obscure but deeply satisfying sense of getting their own back.

And it is right that they should get their own back. They *have* been robbed. Part of the robbery was not our fault: nature, not we, made them into the stupider members of the species. But the rest of it is our fault. We should have protected them from their exploiters, we should have given them a chance to be happy and healthy, and to develop what potentialities they have. (They might surprise us.) But we shall never be able to help them unless we put our own house in order. Justice for the dead-end worker depends on sanity among the administering devising class who effectively rule the society.

So it's the usual story. Physician, heal thyself. Mr Anthony Hartley wrote an interesting essay on this theme[1] in which he tried to suggest an acceptable pattern of life for the middle-class man who is actually going to administer the complex machinery of the society that stretches into the future. Such a man is confronted by, on the one hand, faceless large-scale organisation, the extinguishing of personality, the standardisation of amenities, and the demand of large units for a docile worker bee that will bring to the machine no problems of stubborn individuality. And on the other, the various fads and cults which foster escape and a new consciousness, but do so by ignoring, as Hartley says, "the simple facts of modern social organisation as it at present exists." We cannot take our cue from simple-lifers who drive to the supermarket, any more than from "radical" overthrowers who live on cheques from Daddy.

Hartley sees the dilemma quite clearly. Like all of us, he is a little less clear when it comes to suggesting what to do, but in general his attitude is that the *honnête homme* of the future will be an internal *émigré*.

> The element of individual freedom and aristocratic detachment which he requires to be exemplary must be preserved; but so must a real connection with the world around him. No doubt, he should be in that world but not of it. He should take part in its activities, but refuse to accept its values. What this implies is an exterior capacity to work the system—but an interior capacity to resist the imposition of the ethos arising out of it and to perpetuate other values, in particular those individual ones inherited from a traditional view of Western man. His ability to maintain this halfway position may enable him to modify the organisation world by the importation into it of his personal values. But it will in any case guarantee that he himself does not become a thrall to its cult of efficiency and conformity. He should in fact be able to take it or leave it, to accept it, but not to regard it as the only, or even the most important area of human life.

It will be noticed that the hope of mental and spiritual salvation held out by Hartley is not something easy. It will be obtained, if at all, by a combination of exceptional range, both intellectually and emotionally, with an exceptional power of detachment. "Irony", a word used more than once in his essay, will play an important part, making the new Renaissance Man able to perceive and cope with the large-scale ironies of our confusing existence.

Anthony Hartley's suggestions seem to me good and valid ones—or I would not have referred to them at such length. But one thing is disconcertingly clear. Only a minority of the human race can attain this poise, this range. Even within the (if the word is permissible) *élite* of managers and administrators, not every individual will attain this stature. The rest will fall victim either to the Leviathan of the corporation life, or to the self-indulgent, insidious play-acting of the "alternative society." And even for the few who manage it, what effort, what cultivation will be

[1] Anthony Hartley "Neither Bureaucrat nor Hippie", ENCOUNTER, March 1973.

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needed! Their education will have to be superlatively good. If we are to train them not only to master the intricate skills needed to run the modern world, but also to acquire the detachment, the perspective, the saving and qualifying irony that will painlessly detach them from a too passionate embrace with these skills—if we are to do all this for them, our present schools and colleges, sound and effective as many of them are, will have to be replaced by ones that come very close to perfection.

All this puts a great strain on the teaching profession. And teachers as one actually encounters them, in real life—all the way from the primary-school teacher to the most distinguished professor—are themselves, understandably enough, not often securely in possession of these qualities which we must rely on their imparting to future generations of managers. Their talk—again understandably—is of promotions and pensions; their horizons are limited, very often, by rivalries and jealousies; they shelter within their professional associations as timorously as the worker who never disobeys a strike call from his union.

AND IF THESE PROBLEMS and deficiencies are apparent at the top of the social heap, what must be the problems and deficiencies at the bottom? The question is pertinent because neither set of problems can be effectively tackled in isolation. They must be held in the mind simultaneously. Twenty-five years of our society of opportunity have left us with a complex pattern of prestige and reward, in which the higher levels are shifting and changing places and melting into one another. But always, at the bottom, is the immovable ash-pan into which the least gifted part of the nation falls, or from which it fails to rise. That is an unattractive metaphor. But I defy anyone to go to that cafeteria on a Saturday night and honestly find a prettier one. At present our policy seems to be to take no notice of the contents of that ash-pan unless they blow out and cause disturbances in the form of crime and delinquency. Or else, if we are alternative-society anarchists, to sentimentalise them as Renaissance poets sentimentalised the shepherd in pastoral. My vote would be for a more difficult but more rewarding course than either. Look at them realistically but with sympathy; raise their physical conditions of life, using for the purpose the great wealth that they themselves produce; and begin, if possible, to endow them with human faces.

Inheritance

The mummies
were our Saturday treat
and we saved them till last

took in first
the Iron Maiden
the stuffed owls
and the suit of armour
on a plaster horse

then at the end of a corridor
of lighted fishtanks
stood and frightened ourselves
with the long bandaged limb
and its tarry head.

If you spent the night there
you'd be mad by morning:
this we knew as surely
as summer holidays and winter fogs.

Two things bothered me:
why they were called mummies
and what wounded flesh I'd find
if I stripped the cloth away.

Unbandaging myself today
I knew the answers:

as I peeled my mother
from my hands and feet
the white flesh looked
the same but had no feeling

and scraping the usual smile
from its round mirror
I counted those who had
spent the night there
and been mad by morning.

Edwin Brock

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Alvin Toffler

The Future of Law & Order

NO SOCIAL PROBLEM has received more public attention in the last decade than the breakdown of law and order. A society of the future without law and order would be a very unpleasant place—even more unpleasant than our urban centres are today. Yet I do not think we can understand the present breakdown unless we examine the possibility that we are moving into a wholly new phase in the history of law. We may be passing beyond the "Golden Age" of law to a new way of life in which law will play a different and sharply reduced role.

What I have to say about the relationship of laws to life in a period of social revolution is more in the nature of notes and ruminations than a set of fixed or finished ideas. And it is seen, of course, from the point of view of an amateur Law-and-Order watcher, not a professional. Yet, in the face of a future that is likely to differ radically from the present, we are all, of necessity, amateurs. No one, no matter how professional, can speak with certainty about the shape of the newly-emerging order and the laws that will be needed in it.

In this context, no symbol of the American future seems more chilling in its significance than the shooting of Governor George Wallace. Mr Wallace may be demagogic in his promises and mistaken or hypocritical in his analysis of what is wrong, but he is clearly right when he says that law and order are breaking down in the United States; and he has the wounds to prove it. It is difficult to argue with a headline that says, as a recent one from the *New York Post* did: BOMB PENTAGON. Or about the fact that you can buy heroin openly on many a street corner in New York City. Or the fact the airplanes are hijacked with unnerving frequency. Or that a third of America is afraid to walk alone in the streets at night. Or that there are 90 million American guns in private hands. Or that some of the most prominent "Law-and-Order" politicians have themselves apparently broken the laws against wiretapping and common burglary.

Not so many years ago, the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence prophesied that, unless corrective action was taken quickly, the US ghettos would become "places of terror, perhaps entirely uncontrolled during the night-time hours." It went on to predict that schools, playgrounds, apartment houses, libraries, and other structures would need daytime police, and that armed guards would have to "ride shotgun" on our means of transportation, our buses and trains. Anyone who lives in a major US city, or who has been frisked on the way into a jet, knows that we have already fulfilled many of these nightmarish predictions.

Recently my wife received a call from a friend of ours, a young woman employed as a researcher by one of our leading magazines. She wept as she told of the daylight murder of a young man who had been her friend, and of the knifing of another —both within the same week. The fact that she and her friends happened to be black was incidental, as casualties on both sides of the colour line show.

ALL THIS DRAWS ATTENTION to criminal law. Yet that is only the most dramatically troubled part of our legal system. In both criminal *and* civil law, the judicial system is cracking under unprecedented strain. In the US Federal Courts, 8,600 civil cases have been jammed up for three years or more. And last year 96,000 additional cases were filed. State and local courts were so overloaded that in New York (where there is a backlog of 10,000 felony cases) a judge ruled recently that, except in homicide cases, any suspect not brought to trial within six months would be automatically freed.

ALL THE HEADLINES about shootings and muggings and all the statistics about the judicial log-jam fade into insignificance, however, when they are compared with a single situation at a recent meeting of the Harlem Research Council. Faced with a climbing rate of crime, America is often said to be "a lawless nation." Nothing, it seems to me, could be further from the truth. We

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probably have more law per square inch than any nation in the world. In fact, if there is anything that distinguishes our situation, it is an overgrowth of law and regulation to the point of such choking complexity that the society cannot carry out some of its most needed and basic functions.

At the Harlem Research Council I listened to a discussion of the need for Day-Care Centres, so that black mothers on welfare could be freed to get jobs. Now everyone from the President down is in favour of this 100-percent-American idea that people on welfare ought to work. And yet the number of Day-Care Centres is negligible.

At that meeting, an executive of the American Telephone & Telegraph Corporation, who happened to be present because the company is interested in Day-Care Centres for its AT&T employees, reported that present regulations were so constricting that it required the approval of 11 different city and state agencies to operate a fully legal Day-Care Centre. The result, he said, is the emergence of a new phenomenon—"underground" Day-Care Centres, illegal, unlicensed. In short, it was necessary to break the law to carry out even so simple and desirable a function. I find this far more upsetting than the usual accounts of crime and judicial overload. For when law stands in the way of simple, innocuous, widely approved social change, something is ominously out of control. When ordinary people must break the law to accomplish purposes the society itself regards as admirable, it is hard to insist at the same time that they should "respect law and order."

And so we have a paradoxical picture. Many laws are ignored with impunity; police are ineffective and corrupt in many places; courts are overloaded; jails are Attica-like; and a monstrous excess of laws actually stands in the way of even simple and obviously needed change.

Simultaneously, however, we find that laws are non-existent with respect to a whole range of problems that either now do, or soon will, confront the society with profound ethical and political problems. We had enough laws to obstruct the creation of Day-Care Centres in Harlem; but we have no laws to control the application of such biological breakthroughs as "cloning" which may make it possible, before long, in effect, to create genetic carbon copies of ourselves. We have no laws to regulate some of the new "birth technologies" that may make motherhood obsolete and make it possible to raise embryos outside the body of the woman. There are no laws to control or regulate the initiation of possibly irreversible processes in biology and in ecology. There are no laws to deal with problems like "information-overload" in the society. We have inadequate laws to control the unfair externalisation of costs by large corporations. We have inadequate laws for dealing with the high-powered communication technologies now being developed.

One could continue to list scores of areas of technological and social change, some of them with enormous implications, that are, for all intents and purposes, ignored by the law. For law-makers tend to be backward-looking instead of anticipatory, and when they do look ahead it is ordinarily for only a short distance. This mismatch between the problems rapidly emerging from the society and the existing patchwork of laws, intensifies the crisis. It means that much of our legal system is essentially obsolete.

I DO NOT THINK we can begin to deal with this crisis until we recognise its scope. And to do this we must first look outside the United States. It is highly significant, yet often forgotten by Americans, that they are not the only country whose legal system is now caught up in traumatic change. In France, in Canada, in Germany, in Italy, in England, we see similar signs of a sea change, a fundamental shift in the way law is regarded. England, too, staid and traditional, is having its bombings as well, and not only in Northern Ireland. Instead of the messages signed by The Weathermen (or "The Weather People," as they now prefer to be known) the notes are signed by "The Angry Brigade". It is perhaps symptomatic of shifting British attitudes toward law and authority, in general' that eleven-year-olds recently demonstrated in the streets against caning in the schools, evidently still an educational practice.

In Germany, on the same day that a bomb went off in Washington's Pentagon, another went off at the Hamburg headquarters of the Springer publishing empire, injuring some 15 people. And a recent survey there indicated that even in that nation, whose citizens are reputed to be "sheep-like" in their obedience to law and the state, fully 34% of the population think that a law should not be obeyed if it is unjust. Perhaps the rest of the world should cheer any sign that the German people are beginning to question authority; but the breakdown of law and order is usually bad news for any democracy. And when the breakdown becomes sufficiently serious, ordinary people, "good decent folk", begin to search des-

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perately for some politician—on a white horse, or in a wheelchair—who, they hope, can put things back together again.

It may encourage certain American politicians of the "law and order" stripe to know that in Italy, where the legal *and* political systems have both been shaken badly in recent months, 73% of the voters in a recent poll indicated a willingness to give up full political powers temporarily to a "strong man" with this proviso: "So long as he was just and democratic." However, only 6.3% could suggest who this man might be, and nearly 53% said he did not exist or they did not know if he existed. One wonders what a similar survey would reveal about the American political psyche.

Since something like a legal crisis is occurring in many countries simultaneously, with all of them anxiously appointing Commissions or Study Panels to search for reform measures, it would seem that certain common pressures are at work, and that it is a mistake to conceive of the present crisis in the USA as an isolated phenomenon. This suggests that some of our most cherished American explanations of the problem are either childish or trivial.

TO BELIEVE THAT law is breaking down in the United States because the Supreme Court for a short span of time went "soft on crime" is to duck the issue. Did all the supreme courts in all these other nations suddenly and at the same time decide to coddle criminals? It seems unlikely. Did parents in all these countries simultaneously adopt Doctor Spock as their guide to permissive child-rearing? To think that law has broken down because we've all suddenly simultaneously "gone soft" is superficial, if not, indeed, silly. Even if it were true, the question would remain, *Why?* As for the other side, there are those who say the laws are breaking down because they are "too repressive." But are the laws of today more repressive than, say, those of 20 years ago? And if not, why is the legal crisis upon us now, rather than in 1953? The laws, indeed, may be repressive, but repressive laws do not necessarily make a legal crisis.

IF WE ARE TO DEAL with a legal crisis, it seems to me we are going to have to probe more deeply. What is happening is deeper than most of our judges and lawyers, our presidents and our presidential candidates, suspect. For what is happening is not merely the breakdown of law, but, more important, the breakdown of the underlying order upon which law is based.

Today in all the high-technology nations, from Japan and Sweden to Germany and the United States, we are living through what could be called the general crisis of industrial society. Regardless of its political forms, regardless of the peculiar cultural and historical features that make it different in each country, the industrial system is dying. And until we understand this salient fact, we cannot comprehend what is happening to our law and order. Thus the crack-up of our legal systems is only part of a much larger revolution, the shift to a super-industrial society.

When I say that the industrial system is dying, I am referring to a particular kind of social system that has specific and well-known characteristics. It is a society based on mass production in factories using mechanical, pre-automated machinery. It is a society with bureaucratic, top-down organisational forms in its businesses, schools and government. It is a society based on an essentially materialist value system.[1] Industrial society is a society in which most workers do routine and repetitive work and fill standardised roles. It is a society in which men and women are drenched in standardised ideas distributed from the top down *via* the mass media. It is a society with a relatively simple class structure; and so on.

This is the kind of society that most of us were born into, and this is the kind of society that our legal system serves. But we are now passing through the first stage of a vast trans-national upheaval, a bursting wave of revolutionary change from which a new-style society is already beginning to emerge. This new super-industrial order will be radically different from the industrial order. It will have different technologies, different family institutions, different values, different conceptions of time, space and beauty—and it will have to have totally different legal arrangements as well.

Nobody can blueprint in detail the characteristics of this emergent civilisation. But we can, by looking squarely at what is happening today, describe some of the basic forces powering this revolution. Two basic processes, it seems to me are under way, and they are keys to the breakdown of order. One is fragmentation and the second ephemeralisation. Let me first examine fragmentation.

[1] This is true on both the Capitalist side of the world and the Communist side. Industrial societies essentially take for granted that economic gain is the appropriate goal of public and private activity.

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CONVENTIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE has told us for a century or more that technology standardises people, that it makes us "all alike." We have all heard or uttered the complaint that industrial society and technology create human robots. This may have been true at one time, but one of the fundamental changes in our lives, I believe, is a turnabout in the kinds of technology we deal with and in the consequences of the new technology. For today a new technology is rapidly proliferating which multiplies the choices available to us and thereby enhances rather than suppresses the differences among us.

I can illustrate this in a number of ways. The simplest, though most trivial, way, is to look at the material culture around us, the goods, the products, the consumer packages. It used to be that one drove up to a gas station and the man said "Do you want regular or premium?" But now, if one drives up to a SUNOCO station, he asks whether you want 190, 200, 210, 220, 230, etc., or 2-, 3-, 4- or 5-star. And this is not a purely American phenomenon. The London *Times*, for example, carries an advertisement in which British Petroleum announces: "Now you don't have to buy the wrong octane for your car." It shows a long-haired young man, a clergyman, a bowler-hatted elderly gentleman, a matronly lady, and a chic young *Cosmopolitan* girl, each with a placard on which a different octane is represented. In this way, SUNOCO here and B.P. there have begun to multiply the options of the consumer. (I don't know whether the options are real—whether the gasoline under all those numbers is really different. It may be that 210, 220 and 239 are all the same.) But, as a consumer, my once simple decision is beclouded by options. What's happening here, however, is part of a larger scheme of things. Thus the same process is occurring with respect to all kinds of products. It is true of cigarettes, of automobiles, of telephones.

I can remember when there was a single standard black handset, one type of telephone, in the US The slogan of the telephone company then was "Universal Service." Its goal was to put the same phone in every home. Starting in the early 1950s we began to move toward the pink "Princess" phone and all different sizes, colours, and models, so that today, instead of a single basic telephone, there are no fewer than 1500 varieties of models, sizes, styles and specialised telephones available for special purposes: underwater phones, explosion-proof phones, phones for the hard-of-hearing, etc.

Nor is it only telephones, cars, and cigarettes. It is true of diapers and dog food. Another ad that illustrates it beautifully is from the *New York Times*. It shows drawings of fully 44 different kinds of eyeglass frames. It says, "If you can't find the frame you want at Meyrowitz, you'd better have your eyes checked." If we have to go through this much trouble to buy eyeglass frames, it may be we ought better have our heads checked. Be that as it may, at the simplest level, what we are doing is providing a multiplicity of options, and our choices are becoming more and more complex.

Certainly, it may well be that these are largely trivial choices, and that most of us burn up a great deal of energy making trivial choices, while some of the truly important choices are not available to us. We don't have a smog-free automobile—that's a choice I would like to have, but don't.

Nevertheless, trivial or not, our choices are multiplying, and this, quite apart from other psychological and social consequences, brings with it an enormous proliferation of certain kinds of law. For example, the US Patent Office in 1969 faced an avalanche of 32,600 applications for registered brand-names. Product proliferation has vastly increased, and the problems involved in simply registering the brand and fighting off competitors who want to use similar names have become extremely intense. The more kinds of products and styles and models there are, the more defects are possible, the more types of lawsuits, the more contracts, the more paperwork, and the more regulatory rulings. The 1500 different types of telephones, for example, require enormous amounts of legal work and rule-making from the Federal Communications Commission and from each of the 50 State Public Utility Agencies.

THIS ENORMOUS EXTENSION of material goods is based in part on a generation of increasing consumer affluence. We can *afford* to be different. But more important, I think, is something happening deep down in the technological innards of the society. This is perhaps best symbolised by a computer-based laser gun just introduced into the clothing industry. Before industrialism and mass production arrived on the scene, if a man wanted a piece of clothing made, he went to a tailor or a seamstress, or his wife sewed it. In any case, it was done on a handcraft basis, to his individual measure. All sewing was essentially custom tailoring. Then came the industrial revolution

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when we discovered that it was more efficient, in some ways, to produce identical clothes on a mass production basis. Under this system, the worker placed layer upon layer upon layer of cloth, one on top of the other; he next laid a pattern on top; then, with an electric cutting knife, he cut around the edges of the pattern and produced multiple, identical cut-outs of the cloth. These were then subjected to identical processing and came out identical in size, shape, colour, and so forth.

The new laser machine operates on a radically different principle, however, and it exemplifies a great deal of the new technology now coming in. This machine does not cut 10 or 50 or 100 or even 500 shirts or jackets at a time. It cuts one at a time. But it cuts it faster and cheaper than the mass production methods employed until now. Indeed, the president of GENESCO, the largest manufacturer of apparel in the US says, "The laser machines can be programmed to fill an order for one garment economically." What that suggests is that some day even standard sizes may disappear. It may be possible to read one's measurements into a telephone, or to go into a store and be measured or photographed and have the machine produce exactly one garment cut to one's personal, individualised dimensions.

This is, in effect, custom tailoring or handcraft on a high technology basis. It is virtually a dialectical return—a reinstatement of a system of production that flourished before the Industrial Revolution but is now based on the most advanced, sophisticated technology. It is not a return, however, to handcraft, but an advance to "headcraft." And it symbolises a monumental change not only because it requires, reflects, or creates de-standardised production, but because such a production system needs de-standardised *workers*. Such a system no longer requires tens of thousands of workers all doing the same routine and repetitive tasks day in and day out. It needs people who can use their heads, who can manipulate symbols, who possess a certain amount of creativity, and who can deal with first-time or unusual problems. And so, in our material culture, in that whole complex of technology-products-hardware-goods-consumption, we are shifting from a standardised to a de-standardised culture.

THE SAME IS increasingly true in education. It seems to me there is an enormous—and overdue—push for individualisation of instruction. Just as we individualise the production of a shirt, we are now trying to individualise education. We have struggles over community control. In New York, Blacks have said: "Look, you White people have tried to run the schools for a long time and you've pumped out a standard White-oriented message to all children and you've utilised the same educational methods for all. It hasn't worked for our kids very well. We want the right to be different. We want the right to run our own schools, in our own way, and to give our kids a de-standardised education. . . ." Recently the US Supreme Court approved the right of the Amish religious sect to keep their children out of the common public school system, thus approving their right to be different. We experiment with "voucher plans" likely to break up the standardised big-city school systems. So here, too, we see a movement toward fragmentation or diversification rather than consolidation, cohesiveness, and uniformity.

In the media the same tendencies are obvious. We have recently witnessed the death of major magazines with large circulations—magazines like *Life* and *Look* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. Some said this symbolised "the end of print." Not at all. What has happened is a population explosion of mini-magazines, magazines that carry multiple specialised messages to small groups, instead of a single message to 10 or 20 million people at the same time. Media-carried messages are now being segmented with special messages going to special groups. Thus we have a proliferation of special-interest publications which zero in on the most refined interests. *The Graphic Antiquarian*, for example, is for collectors of photographical memorabilia, early historical cameras, and the like. We now have hundreds, indeed thousands, of such special-interest publications, and that, too, reflects a de-standardisation of the media and our informational environment.

Even in television the same process is occurring. Television is not the most advanced communications technology, which is the way it usually conceives of itself. It is, in fact, a primitive technology. It is only as we move into the second generation and third generation of video technology, with the introduction of cable television and video cassettes, that we begin to get a new communication system radically different from the old one, and once again following the same change pattern.

The old system is known as broadcasting, and the very word "broadcasting," means transmis-

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sion of a message from one point to many points. ABC, CBS, and NBC, through their rather centralised control over our communications system, send identical messages at the same hour to tens of millions of Americans, so that everyone sees the Johnny Carson Show at the same time, perhaps with an hour or two delay. A standardised message is carried to tens of millions of people, exactly as though a standardised product were being manufactured for them. The importance of cable and cassette is that these break that system down. They increase to an almost unlimited number the available channels. This means that everybody, or every group, can have his, her or their own views, messages, and values reflected and amplified through the media.

We used to bemoan the monopoly of the press. The number of daily newspapers declined for many years, although I believe it has now stabilised. But now we have been witnessing the birth of an increasing number of "underground" papers, specialised papers, papers critical of the press itself. And so, all across the board, the new technologies, whether engaged in manufacturing clothing or manufacturing automobiles or manufacturing messages, permit and even, one might say, encourage a move from standardisation to de-standardisation, which is perhaps another word for fragmentation.

The same is even true of language. Lexicographers are surprised in surveying the United States just how much regional difference still prevails. There is a growing loss of a common vocabulary and, again, it is not limited to the United States. In Canada, the French-Canadians fight for the right to speak French, and in France, as we can read in *Le Monde*, the Alsatians are fighting for the right to speak Alsatian. As one headline puts it: "It's *chic* to speak Alsatian" these days.

And so, instead of nations coming together, coalescing, they are, it appears to me, becoming more different. Significantly, this is true not only at the level of material culture and ideational culture, but also of the social structure. This explains why we have seen the process of ethnicisation taking place in our country. It explains why the French-Canadians are fighting, not only for their language, but for their right to lead their own kind of lives and to be treated fairly. It is why Canada talks about developing a "mosaic culture." It is why Blacks say "Black is beautiful." It is why Poles call for Polish power, and the Italians create an Anti-Defamation League.

We are becoming what some Japanese sociologists call a "multi-channel" society. More and more sub-cultures are springing up from the soil of the larger society; and this special differentiation has profound psychological effects on individuals. Here, for example, are the words of a young man living in a Commune, and explaining why.

> "Isn't this separatism every place you look. How about between the races? Or this new woman power issue. . . . I never felt it like this last time, total coming apart. And I felt, I really felt. For the first time that chasing my tail off into the hinterlands was not just an escape. But it was more like a positive action, finding a place with kindred souls to come together. . . . They're trying to stop that splintering off of everything and come together."[2]

Psychologist Herbert Gerjuoy at the State University of New York in Albany puts it another way. He is describing our options, indeed our "over-choice" in personality styles:

> "A century ago, when somebody was growing up, he usually dealt with many fewer people than somebody does today. He spent the larger portions of his time with members of his family, because he did not spend as many years at school. . . . Also, the school was usually much smaller, and there were fewer different teachers. Many students knew only one or two different teachers for their entire school career. Similarly, there were fewer different ministers, doctors, storekeepers, etc., to get to know. A very important additional difference . . . was that 100 years ago there was no television or radio in the home to give the child a chance to meet many different kinds of strangers from many different walks of life and even from different countries. A century ago, very few people ever saw a foreign city. Now almost everyone has, at least on television.
>
> "The results of all of this is that 100 years ago people had only a small number of different people to imitate or model themselves after. Their choices were even more limited by the fact that the people they could model themselves after were themselves all of limited experience."

What has happened, then, is a material and cultural fragmentation that penetrates deep into our psyche, as well as into the social structure, causing, in the end, enormous political fragmentation as well. Thus, I believe, we are, in fact, coming apart politically.

Once again we must step outside the United States to see that the process is not just local. Some French-Canadians, for example, if I may refer to them once again, are fighting for "the liberation of Quebec." Friends of mine who are relatively responsible officials in the Canadian

[2] Quoted in Roy Ald's excellent book, *The Youth Communes* (Tower Publications. New York. 1970).

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Government say that it is not far-fetched to believe that within five or ten years Quebec will either be an independent nation, or at least have achieved some different status with respect to the federal government of Canada. In Northern Ireland, in Brittany, in many different countries, we see secessionist pressures building up. Even New York City is now talking about "seceding" from the "colonial power" exercised in Albany, and with good reason. A former member of the British Cabinet with whom I talked not long ago suggested that after a British entry into the Common Market, it would not surprise him to see the Scots, the Northern Irish, and the Welsh demanding their own representatives in Brussels, rather than simply accepting English representation. Everywhere there are centrifugal political forces at work.

A JAPANESE POLITICAL SCIENTIST has recently described America in words that are exact and acute and, therefore, absolutely terrifying. According to Professor Yonosuke Nagai of the Tokyo Institute of Technology, America is in the midst of a crisis that originates in these centrifugal forces. They are, he says,

> pulling American institutions apart, throwing the pieces outward from the center.... The United States is becoming a divided nation, a nation without a unified general will. Blacks, Southerners, students, women, policemen, Italian, Irish, and Jewish immigrants—even the WASPS, whose position is declining—all seek outlets for long-accumulated complaints and dissatisfactions. And all have come to share a delusion of persecution, a belief that the rights that they should enjoy are being taken away from them by others.
>
> What has happened is that substantial and structural problems have so shaken American society and politics that the institutions have lost their ability to restore themselves. Highly advanced technological innovation and automation have disrupted the system structures of population, capital and information in American society. In the process, the balance of the eco-system of society has been so severely damaged it probably cannot be restored.

I think Professor Nagai is right, except that it is not solely an American phenomenon. It is, to one degree or another, happening in many of the high technology nations. And all of this must, of course, have the deepest implications for the future of law.

THE SOCIAL ORDER has exploded, has been torn apart, propelled in many different and even contradictory directions by strange new technological and psychological forces. This fragmentation radically increases the number of conflicts to be resolved by the judiciary, so that Warren Burger, Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court, refers to a "litigation explosion." Simultaneously, the fragmentation encourages the addition of new laws, layer upon layer of choking legal restrictions, prohibitions and constraints. It is as though we hope that through the multiplication of law we could somehow hold the whole tottering structure together.

LAW IS AFFECTED, however, by another force in the super-industrial revolution, and this is the phenomenon for which I have used the word "ephemeralisation," the phenomenon of transience or temporariness or impermanence. It is the special character of the super-industrial revolution that it happens fast. The so-called neolithic revolution (as it was described by V. Gordon Childe) stretched over millennia and the industrial revolution took centuries; but the super-industrial revolution will be compressed into decades.

This, too, creates very special problems for law because most of our legal and constitutional arrangements are based on the unspoken assumption of permanence. They are based on the tempo, the steady rhythm, of an earlier, more slowly moving civilisation. Today the accelerated forces of change create exactly the opposite condition. The rhythm of change is unsteady, irregular, volatile, hard to predict. And, instead of relationships lasting a long time, they grow more temporary with every fleeting day.

We are shifting (to give only one example) to a system based on extremely short-lived organisational relationships. We are moving from the old bureaucratic structures, which were built to last forever, to new types of organisations called task forces, or *ad hoc* protest groups, or temporary projects, or problem-solving teams, and so on—each brought together for short periods of time and then dismantled. This system I have termed "*ad hocracy*," and it contrasts strongly with the old bureaucratic, pyramidal permanence that we used to have. The legal system does not know how to contend with this form of guerrilla organisation, whether in business, education, politics, or elsewhere.

Similarly, we are shifting toward more temporary interpersonal relationships. When I grew up, a best friend was somebody who stayed with one during all of one's childhood and adolescence.

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That is no longer true for a great many young people today. Because of geographical, occupational, and social mobility, they are learning that even best friends are temporary. Fathers are transferred to the North or the West or the Southeast and best friends are sequentially ripped out of the lives of young people.

The statistic that might be regarded as the most severe challenge to law in the whole society is not the number of crimes but the fact that some 40 million Americans change their place of residence in any twelve-month period. That is an incredible uprooting procedure. I don't know any society that could deal with that kind of fluidity and mobility.

The law, then, designed for permanence and for a much less diversified social system, finds it difficult to come to grips with the new high speed society, the transient, ephemeral problems, the issues and crises that fire off quickly and then are often forgotten two weeks later, but were nevertheless important at the moment.

THE MORE RAPID the rate of change in technology, in family life, in religion, in education, in sexual behaviour, in fashion and in life-style, the greater the freedom of the individual. He is no longer necessarily locked in the painful old patterns. But he also finds it harder and harder to know what will happen next, to predict the consequences of his own behaviour and the reaction of other people or institutions to him. And when this happens, the social order begins to break down—not merely the law. The law is more easily replaceable. What breaks down is the underlying social regularity or pattern. For the glue that holds societies together internally is, precisely, predictability, a complex set of expectations that are met with sufficient regularity to give people a sense that things work, that the social structure can protect and serve them.

The anthropologist of law, E. A. Hoebel, put it simply. He said that people living together must be able to predict what the others will do.

> If each were actually liable to pop off along any one of all the different lines of behaviour human beings are potentially capable of, the result would be chaotic, indeed. Any organisation of complex activities and social life would be quite impossible .... Continued frustration of individual expectancies would soon reduce all men to neurotics and psychotics.[3]

[3] E. A. Hoebel, *The Law of Primitive Man* (Harvard University Press. 1967).

In primitive societies there is a built-in natural order. The sun rises and sets. Agriculture is routine, life is routine. The social system is relatively undifferentiated and uncluttered. People conduct transactions on a face-to-face basis with people they have known all their lives. Knowing one another, they know what to expect of one another. They know the consequences of stepping out of line, and the law in such societies is only minimally required.

It is when life becomes increasingly "non-routine," when novelties intrude, when surprises and astonishments are perpetual accompaniments to daily life, when complexity grows to the point that most interactions are no longer face-to-face with people we have known since childhood, that law becomes essential.

The law, above all, is a mechanism for clarifying and *predicting* the reactions of other people to certain classes of behaviour. This is why it bolsters the social order. Law can be seen as a tool used to build the needed predictability into the society. It helps predict what will happen when we violate a contract, what will happen if we steal an automobile or forge a cheque or slander a competitor or smuggle contraband.

US Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Cardozo, in a classic statement, defined a law as a rule of conduct "so established as to justify a prediction ... that it will be enforced by the courts." His distinguished colleague Oliver Wendell Holmes defined law as "prophecies of what the courts will do."

It is in this sense that most lawyers, whether they think of themselves in this way or not, are paid professional futurists. Much of their work consists of forecasting, or predicting, for a client what consequences will flow from contemplated action. Will the contract hold up in court? Will the Justice Department let the merger go unchallenged? Will the Inland Revenue Service upset the corporate structure? And so on. Sometimes lawyers even have to put their own money where their predictions are, as when they render an "opinion of counsel," which, in effect, guarantees the client against a faulty forecast. Even as simple a thing as a contract is a pledge made about some future action to be taken, a prediction of what will happen sometime in the future.

When the rate of change is accelerated and the super-industrial revolution bursts upon us, it becomes more and more difficult to make accurate predictions. Thus, the increasing speed of change

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and the ephemerality associated with it creates a profound paradox for our legal systems.

IF THE LAW IS PERMANENT or fixed, then the society cannot change very easily; and if the system becomes too rigid, the pressures are liable to build such a head of steam that they simply explode in violence, until the legal system cracks and new, "permanent" laws are written to take the place of the old ones. If, on the other hand, laws are not fixed and permanent, if they are flexible and subject to change, if they, too, are seen as temporary, ephemeral, they permit legitimate change to take place. They permit the system to adapt to the fast on-rushing future. But they do not provide much predictability. The businessman finds it hard to plan if he knows that the tax law will be changed at year end. A young girl finds it hard to know how to behave if the abortion law passed by the New York Legislature of 1971 is repealed in 1972 or shortly thereafter. A young man cannot plan his education if the draft law changes every month or two.

And so there is an inherent paradox, and the super-industrial revolution challenges the law at many points. As the society fragments, more and more groups spring up to effectuate an ever wider variety of goals and value systems and conflicts. This demands that the law find ways of managing and resolving the inevitable conflicts among them. But, as the society also grows more temporary, even these sub-groups become more temporary. They come and go, with the teddy-boys followed by the hippies followed by the skin-heads, each, in turn, passing into oblivion or transmuting into something new. Can laws be written, enacted and repealed fast enough to keep up with all of this accelerating social turnover, not to mention the turnover of technology and business forms? In my view they cannot.

To put it simply, when the society fragments or differentiates, more laws are required to help hold the pieces in equilibrium. Beyond a point, however, this leads to a jungle-like overgrowth of law. Concurrently, when the society changes rapidly, melting into successive forms or stages at high speed, laws must be changed to reflect the new circumstances. But the more frequently they are revised, the less predictive they become and the less valuable.

This is why, although the reform of present judicial procedure may be important, although it is necessary to fight for certain appropriate changes in law, and to clear away the dead wood through decriminalisation, from a long range point of view, if that is all we do, it is a losing struggle. The law in this case is dead. I simply do not believe that we can hold the society together with law, and I believe that every time we try to do it by simply adding laws, we choke ourselves to death.

THE ANSWER TO THE CRISIS, therefore, lies not in the law, but in the reconstitution of social order. We are at the end of 10,000 years of legal history. Before the "neolithic revolution" (*i.e.* the invention of agriculture and the settlement of cities) law existed. Primitive societies had well-developed legal systems; but they played a distinctly subordinate role in the life of the society. It is only with the coming of complex, urbanised societies that law grew, at least in the West, to a dominant position in our lives. With the super-industrial revolution our goal must be for law once again to assume a subordinate role.

This does not mean that we should stop trying to improve the legal system by making the courts function more smoothly, clearing the judicial log-jam, or rewriting the law books.

We shall have to explore new technology—computers, cable systems, picture-phones, and the like—that could make it possible to assemble a jury instantaneously through random processes or to represent specific sub-publics. (We could guarantee, for example, that when a Harlem Black goes on trial, he or she faces a jury consisting of randomly represented Blacks or on which some predetermined fraction of the randomly selected group is black.) But while we are busy employing "futuristic" approaches, we ought also to take some lessons from primitive societies in which much of the legal machinery was or still is *ad hoc*.

Among the Ifugao tribesmen of Luzon there are careful rules about who gets the children and the property in the case of a divorce. To eliminate dispute, each party chooses a referee. These "*monhangdad*" are not professional divorce-lawyers and are part of no formal court, but decide any differences and receive a small fee for their service. They, in effect, constitute a temporary court and then dissolve it when the case is over. Among the Yurok Indians (according to the anthropologist A. L. Kroeber) a plaintiff would, in effect, hire two representatives from a community other than his own. (They could not be relatives.) In turn, the defendant would do likewise. These intermediaries or "crossers" would

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go back and forth, listening to each party's evidence and arguments about the justice and legality of his case, and render a decision for damages. Court was then not adjourned but dismantled.

We are not about to return to Rousseauian innocence, and no simple analogy is intended; but the idea that many problems might be resolved outside the formal legal system, or that not all courts need to be permanent, ought to be systematically explored in our search for solutions. The choice of temporary, non-professional or para-professional legal aid has, obviously, not been adequately pursued.

Similarly, we shall have to bring the laws that do exist into some semblance of timeliness. This means that despite what I have said about the burgeoning overgrowth of law, we need an agenda of "future laws" or laws needed to make sure we experience a future.

LAW IS A RESPONSE to what might be termed predictable deviation from social norms. Usually a law is written only when sufficient deviation has occurred to warrant the prediction that further deviation will occur. This occurs after the fact. We need now to think in terms of *anticipatory law*. Rather than waiting for some bizarre disaster to occur, for example, before we turn legislative attention to it, we need to attempt, as best we can, to anticipate those problems that will or ought to be legally regulated. Thus we need to take steps now—not five or ten years from now—to regulate experimentation with the biological process, referred to earlier, called "cloning." It is possible for a group of intelligent lawyers, legislators, and laymen, perhaps with some help from professional futurists, to prepare a tentative agenda to identify some of the social and technological problems that are likely to burst upon us in the decade or two immediately ahead. A Commission on Anticipatory Law ought to be a part of the legal-legislative system at all levels of government.

We are caught in a rapidly accelerating treadmill, and it is clear we cannot simply get off it by calling a moratorium on new laws. If this is so, however, we must also accelerate the rate at which we discard obsolete law. To save shelf space, some libraries eliminate books for which they have had no call in some fixed period of time, say, ten years. Perhaps we need to apply a similar pruning principle to law, automatically striking any law that has not been tested or called into service within some reasonable period of time, say 15 or 20 years. Whether we adopt an automatic procedure of this kind or not, it is evident that we shall have to make wider use of decriminalisation and codification, seen not as once-in-a-lifetime emergency measures, but as a continuing process.

We shall, moreover, have to shift the entire character of the punishment system in society. Today our systems typically punish in one of two ways: time or money, sometimes permitting one to be converted into the other; it is jail or fine. This extremely narrow and unimaginative approach to social sanction has two consequences. First, the courts miss many opportunities for encouraging rehabilitation through empathy, and for education of the public. And second, the man with the money suffers less than the man without because he can afford his fine more easily. Both these consequences further reduce social support for the law.

There is, however, another class of sanction available to us that I call "experiential." They do not put the guilty person in prison or, except coincidentally, deprive him of money. They make him undergo certain experiences. We do a little of this today, but so little that when a judge sentences a youth to clean a wall on which he has written graffiti, it warrants a feature item in the daily newspaper. Judges also occasionally send convicted persons to psychiatric treatment or drug rehabilitation programme or to school. But we make very little use of experiential sanctions.

In the future, I believe, we will make far greater use of them, recognising their profound educational and rehabilitative value. Here are some examples of how this might be done: while some of them are trivial, they illustrate a process that might be applied to more serious matter as well. Thus, instead of hitting a parking violator with a succession of, by and large, useless fines, a judge could, under an experiential system do the following. Sentence him to a day of street cleaning, during which he must remove the garbage from under the illegally parked cars. Or perhaps park a city truck in the offender's driveway for a week. Or impound his car not for an hour or two, but for a month or two, so that the sentence forces experiential changes in the offender's life. Today we impound for the wrong reasons and for the wrong time periods.

A vandal who has ripped a seat on the bus or subway might be sentenced to a day or two in a seat factory, or at painting and maintenance work at the depot. Offenders who ripped the telephone

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book out of the public booth might be given a week of cleaning the urine smell out of those phone booths. A shoplifter who has taken clothing from a store might have her own clothes impounded for a week or a month, and so forth. One could, it seems to me, be far more imaginative in the kinds of things we do.

In a more serious case, the executive of a corporation found guilty of selling dangerously defective automobiles might be sentenced to thirty days as mechanic's helper repairing them, or operating a tow truck, or serving as attendant in a hospital where victims of defect-related accidents were stitched up, preferably as an attendant in their rooms. Or perhaps such an offender might personally indemnify the victim's children so the victim can send his children to college. And so on. Indeed, if confinement is to be the method, why confinement to a prison where crime and sodomy tend to be the curriculum: why not confinement to his own home? Or to some community agency to serve without pay for a fixed period?

Obviously, there are many practical problems connected with this approach. Yet such experiential sanctions accord more fully with the essentially post-materialist value system which is beginning to emerge in our society.

EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, we need a much deeper vision. Whatever we do must be seen as a step, carefully thought out, toward the redesign of the whole social system. The changes we make should not be haphazard. We need to create them, to pattern them, in such a way that they help us recreate a sane social order.

Until we tackle seriously the task of restructuring our society, its family system, its economic and technological institutions, and above all its political machinery, we shall be forced to live in a society that is out of control. Until we begin to recreate an order based, in part, on much smaller and more decentralised units, our society will continue to run out of control. Until we experiment and develop self-policing mechanisms, so that sub-groups in the society (whether they are Chicanos, or Blacks, or homosexuals, or surfers) are left free to develop their own values, while taking responsibility for the policing of their own members—until this is the case, our society will run out of control.

The notion of self-policing communities is, in itself, not totally foreign to us. In the United States most police functions are reserved to local, as distinct from national, authorities. Yet the communities served by these local authorities are often so large, and so diverse, that the result is an attempt to impose uniform control over radically non-uniform populations. Moreover, because of our agricultural heritage, the American units are typically geographical.

We have also experimented with certain minimal forms of self-policing in non-geographical units—various industries and professions, for example. These non-geographical or functional units seldom carry much enforcement authority, although one could easily see how they might. By making an entire profession or industry or some sub-group of it collectively responsible, to some degree, for the behaviour of individual practitioners or companies, it is possible for the larger society to exert pressure on the group which, in turn, therefore, polices its members.

What we do not have anywhere is a significant example of a non-geographical self-policing unit that is sub-cultural rather than functional. For example, we nowhere expect or assume that hippies, or surfers, or homosexuals, or Hungarian/Asian immigrants will, as a group, maintain order among themselves at the risk of order being imposed by the society at large.

In the decade ahead I believe we shall have to experiment with a wide variety of self-policing mechanisms at geographical, functional, and sub-cultural levels. By focusing our attention on this problem, we begin to attack the central crisis facing us, and we move towards an ultimate reduction in the relative importance of law *per se*. We need to remember something that the anthropologists have only learned in the past century: that while man can live, and often does, without law, he cannot live without order.

THIS, THEN, is the deeper challenge. We need to replace law with a degree of order. We can no longer allow runaway changes in technology, in land development, in resource exploitation, in bio-science, and transportation, to destroy order without creating fresh order to take its place. Until we begin to choose our future, rather than letting it overwhelm us, we shall be forced to live in a society that is choking us with too much law in the wrong place, at the wrong time, for the wrong purposes, while depriving us of the essential ingredients of civilised life, a sense of personal safety and social order.

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Renzo Rosso

The Fair Ones

THAT THEY CALLED HIM "the dark one" did not in fact offend his susceptibilities; all the less since the nickname was obviously given because of his race, among whom a darkness of complexion was by no means an uncommon attribute. Very probably it had been pinned on him by the townsmen, at the games, where he won prizes with his recitations; or in the palace by the slaves and cooks of the King—but not because of his skin (there were many as dark as he), rather to distinguish him from themselves, in recognition of his talent or, perhaps, because of his unique position at court.

"Phemius the dark one," then: *ho melas* in their language. Nor was it inaccurate from their point of view; that is, from the point of view of their coloration, so much paler and pinker, the eyes for the most part blue, the hair fair; though, nonetheless, they themselves were becoming darker with the passing of time, and would always become darker and darker till they reached that intermediate colour, between pink and olive, that one could already see in the streets; and which would be the final outcome of the work of generations, of intermarriage and the increasing rarity of the two extremes. A long process, that had gone on for who knows how long and that without doubt must be attributed to time, to something that had separated the first stage from its sequel; a process that men of different races had been forced to undergo, in order to live together and mix amicably. Yet what was known about when and how it had come about could be reduced to this: that a foreign race had disembarked on the island, and remained. Not even his father Terpius or (as far as Phemius remembered) *his* father, Pimbrus, had known more about it than that; certain only of the fact that they had come, the fair ones, the invaders, and that they themselves, by contrast, were descended from the ancient inhabitants of the place, born perhaps from the union of some nymph and a dolphin, or a sea eagle. For the rest, even if he had wanted to attribute to chance the fact that the King's family and some of the princes' families had fair skins, Phemius would have been able to make this deduction from the employment of his own people, so different from the others, so natural to that island, much more natural than the difficult business of stockbreeding, than the even more difficult one of agriculture, and than the art of war, necessary though that might be. His own people were conversant with the handling of the lance and the bow, and when the King called them they hastened not only to sail his ships but also to fight beside his chariot. But they did not love this art and did not resort to it unless ordered, or absolutely forced to do so.

This could have been the reason for their being cast in the role of the invaded and the conquered. Perhaps there was a battle. Certainly the battle was lost, or at least led to a curtailment of the rights and freedoms they had enjoyed before. At all events in the memories of the old there was no trace to be found of anything of the sort; which could mean that circumstances or their own virtues had softened the blow and brought about in their situation at that time a tolerant and uneventful coexistence. In effect, his people were equal to the others, they gave to the princes and the King no more than their due; in the laws there were no hidden distinctions to their detriment, and their rights and privileges as fishermen were respected.

Yet there were differences, imperceptible but deep, and the last words of the old sorceress whom he had met on the banks of

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the Ilissus during his travels as a young man had done no more than make them clear in his mind. Away from land, for example, in the open air, when he went from time to time with his people to fish, he sensed that they were more at ease than at home, even though all their houses were on the coast, grouped together, and no foreigners lived there. It was as if their actions and their thoughts were freer there than in the presence of the women and children on *terra firma*.

He knew too that such feelings were very vague, as if they carried them only on their backs; to such an extent that no one would recognise them or admit them. To speak of oppression would have been to exaggerate; and yet not too far from the truth. A malaise then, that he could not in any way justify, and that was caused probably only by his own aware and restless spirit; impossible to admit and therefore doubly unpleasant (and had it not been a case of the same kind, this not being able to, and not knowing how to, give expression to things that were certainly "in the air"—his father's stubborn and unreasonable opposition when he was offered the opportunity of going to the King's court and becoming a singer?).

It seemed to him sometimes that it would be enough for him to stop dead, and reflect. Matters of religion, for example, or, rather, religious ideas and images. But to whom could he have confided the perplexity that the divine beings awoke in him, without risking being considered mad, and even being thrown to the dogs? There were not two ways of worship, and his people went to the temple of Zeus like the others. His explanation would have had to be a long one, and cautious, and also eloquent; and not all the arguments were clear in his mind. Yet for some mysterious reason the fables of his people, which he himself tried to tell to the children, because the adults so enjoyed them, were so different from the legends of the others, and even more different from the tales of the Heroes, which had clearly not originated there on the island; since to learn them had not he himself undertaken long journeys throughout Achaea?

Pani, their Pani of the hundred faculties and the hundred disguises, who had halted the sun and striven three days and three nights with the immortal whale of Alkan, never took the life of anybody who was not wicked. And Astahar, the beautiful nymph from whose breasts came all the fishes, who ruled the capricious tides and the winds, never cruelly killed any living creature, human or divine, in her whirlpools. Nor did Proterus, with the seal's head and the eel's body, the ever-laughing; nor Jati the dwarf, nor the five Baratides, the nymphs who guarded the springs, nor Vorch, the giant full of sleep, nor Letis who guided the tunny fish into the nets and, by way of a joke, freed the squids already caught. It was very true that there was no lack of melancholy and death in their legends, and how could it have been otherwise, since they were legends of the Ocean of a thousand deaths? Nor did they lack anger against mortals, Pani and Proterus, but they showed it only to punish a crime, and thus to right a wrong and re-establish justice.

Zeus on the other hand, whom he nevertheless honoured, and the others, whom he nevertheless honoured, each of them wise, strong, majestic and just, were different. Naturally it would have been unreasonable to forget Zeus' glorious wisdom and to remember the episode of Aesculapius, or that he had burnt Semele alive, devoured Metis, made Lycurgus a criminal and mad, that he was a parricide and the son of a parricide. Unreasonable to forget the prodigious virtues of Apollo and to remember that he had strangled Tisius, massacred the Cyclops and spread plague more or less everywhere in the Peloponnese, in Boeotia, at Rhodes. Or to remember, of Artemis, the murder of Orion and Actaeon; or, of Ares, the useless slaughter in war and the fathering of Diomedes the tyrant. To remember, without being affected, Cybele, Dionysius himself and the horror of his death; or, again, the criminal nature of Tantalus, and that disgusting table that he was able to prepare for him. Yes, he who honoured and venerated the gods was able to think of all this, often; not during the fifty, hundred, thousand days of sunlight, but in the days of darkness. He knew that those divine crimes had the terrible grandeur of nature; and that, basically, they lay always in her teeming womb—and yet it seemed to him always that part of their horribleness had some obscure connection with the fair-skinned people. He knew too that his thought was oblique and

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that it drew from things many more hurtful elements than in reality they contained; perhaps it was his character ("You are a son of twilight" the King had told him, the first time he heard him), or perhaps he had let himself be unwisely moved by the dark words of the sorceress of the Ilissus, and they had become entwined round his heart, sucking from it all confidence, leaving only the grey sterility of diffidence, mistrust; and so he now saw non-existent phantoms, unhappiness in the children, cruelty in the charitable, and a poisonous salt in the most acute intellects. And yet. . . .

Great was the piety of the fair-skinned ones, but how could he not be aware of their arrogance? How could they not be appalled before sacrifices that turned the altars into slaughter-houses, where the prayers were drowned in the death-cries of the victims? Those who had their throats cut, to be sure, were oxen, rams and lambs, and yet he could never dismiss from his mind the sad marks of that blood, and not ask himself what purification one could ever have from the suffering of a living creature, when to honour the heavenly beings honey, milk and incense would have been enough, as they were used by them, the "dark ones", in their innocent ceremonies of the sea.

THE FAIR-SKINNED MEN were gifted; they moulded the world to any idea. It was certainly they, or their brothers of the mainland, who discovered miraculous bronze, who raised sinuous walls round cities, who brought to perfection the art of government and the art (even more difficult) of writing; perhaps even made the ships bigger and faster. In spite of this there was something at the heart of all their projects, something boundless, that did not convince, because it seemed to bring more weariness and sorrow—too much weariness and too much sorrow for one not to doubt their rightness, and not to have a lingering suspicion that interwoven with those inventions and conquests there might be a spirit of evil.

Probably a lot derived from their imagination, which was limitless; it was enough to think of the delight they took in paintings and in songs, and of the excitement which they found in them (and which, alas!, they had transmitted in a high degree to Phemius himself). His own people, too, constructed fantasies, since this was a human faculty, but their visions were circular, they produced a familiar enchantment, and like wheels or planets they circled and returned, never-endingly. His people were repetition; they were seed, flower, fruit and winter, and if he looked at his father he saw the first man made of the divine clay. Times without number they had stood reflected in the features of the face that was said to be Zeus', carved who knows when from the rock, guarding the forbidden path that led upwards to the Anois. In his low square forehead, his eyes that were symmetrical and protuberant like those of a turtle, in the cross formed by his nose and his eyebrows, in the silence of the tightly closed lips, they had worshipped the Father Of All, mysterious and alien.

Times without number they had listened to the story of Pani biting his tail, each year reborn and wandering in the belly of the whale until he was finally re-absorbed into the autumnal trunks of the oak trees, with holy humility and attention, with patient enjoyment and a drunken sleepiness. Those others, on the contrary, seemed to put time outside themselves, as if they did not belong to it entirely, and to strike it, in order to break the established moulds and see how they were made, and make new ones. They journeyed, and the spirit of their movement was sudden and restless, beyond natural hazards and their own discoveries, goaded by their own presence; as if restlessness went before them everywhere and so reflected, in every country they touched, the passion and the precariousness of their faith. For this reason too it seemed almost that their belief did wrong to the gods; but, even more, the daring of their imagination. It was their own shadow that they cast among those holy ones, and heretical rivalry had produced Prometheus, and perhaps the Fates.

HOW MANY TIMES he had returned in memory to his novitiate in Achaea, at Pylos, at Mycenae, and finally at Samos and at Lesbos, where they had sent him to learn their songs. For that was one of the first causes of his loss of confidence. Because there he had learned to sing of the Heroes and (without his at first noticing their wrongness) their mortal lives, the mortal capriciousness involved, their will

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and destiny and end, in the country of the gods. There he had seen Lapsacus draw a young girl, to portray the features of some goddess whose name he no longer remembered; and people, in the end, admiring the goddess, the girl, and Lapsacus. In the same way, many years later, one of his pupils came to Ithaca, and on the door of the palace, on the pediment of the temple, on the inside walls of the throne room, the human and animal nature was reproduced without any delay; and now its beauty protected its uncertain substance, its uncertain scope, its uncertain worth.

But, again, how and to whom could he voice his doubts, since he himself played the part of a corrupter? "Sing, Phemius!" they said; and he began "I will tell you the stories of Jason, of Hercules, of Glaucus, their rare fortune, their courage and their adventures, the tragic death which laid them low"—and he sensed how they were hypnotised, enslaved, and their hearts turned to wax. For sure, the face and body of Athene were beautiful, and like many others the tale of the Trojan War was fascinating—even to him, as he told it; but this very enchantment that the stories exercised alarmed him, seeming to him the most subtle and dangerous sorcery that could be imagined. Was it not the greatest deceit of all, this clothing a life in colours and phrases —and a cheat, since in the end, there within, within the painted figures and the pictures of past events, was really its opposite: death? The innocent spirit was led astray by visions that were not dreams; and since truth and reality were not present there, the emerging from them, the awakening, could not but be bitter—yes, to the extent of stirring the senses and predisposing the hearer to a compensating violence. This beauty, finally, seemed nothing more than a proud fraud, and for this reason a sign only of disorder.

In this way he intuitively understood all these things, and wandered round them continually, without ever finding a door to enter, or that thread that could lead to their centre and solve for him the enigma of the fair-skinned ones. That they were the favourites of the gods, there was no longer any doubt; that they seemed the best among the races of men was a consequence of that favour; that they were in fact so—this was the question that Phemius tried to answer. The impressions he had formed of them to their detriment had always been too vague to solidify into a proven fact. His peaceful spirit had been provoked time and again, yet nothing had ever happened sufficiently clear and precise for him to throw from his shoulders the disagreeable burden of his prejudice. That is to say, he would have liked not so much to justify his aversion as to clarify it, once and for all.

It was the King's return that made this possible; an event which from the start was filled with shadows, although everything could have been explained—and was in fact explained by the King himself in scrupulous detail, the very day that he made his ghostlike reappearance. He had disembarked one morning at the end of spring, at dawn, from a Phoenician ship; and the news, spread in a flash, had made people hasten from all over the island to gather before the palace.

Thirteen years before, the King had left with five ships and two hundred and fifty soldiers and sailors, the flower of the island, and there was not a family which did not wait anxiously for the return of the little army. Merchants and strolling singers, it is true, had already brought with them, of recent years, an echo of the grave losses which the long siege of Troy had cost; but Odysseus, when he came through the great bronze door to greet and enlighten his people, was alone. The words, the sighs, the sapient pauses, the bloody tales of the war and its glories, all went for nothing; he was the only one who had come back. And among the women who tore their hair and the weeping of the old, Phemius felt himself burning with his old mistrust. Of all his companions Odysseus was the strongest (and not only in the praises of the poets), the most expert in the use of arms, the swiftest and the cleverest. If they had been faced by the terrors of death, it was natural that the best endowed to resist should have been he. That he had resisted and had, what was more, returned home was nevertheless a kind of challenge, and his widely praised proclamation of ten golden pieces was at once for Phemius something quite other than a spontaneous impulse towards reparation. That gift promised to every family bereaved by the war had emptied the mourning voice of Ithaca of the resentment which was in it at the start. Certainly one had to take the King's generosity into account, his resources being

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at that time small or actually non-existent. But when, that same night, the last to leave Odysseus and the only independent witness, he saw a large number of chests being unloaded from the foreign ship and carried to the palace in complete silence, even that magnanimous action had to be discounted.

Then what was wrong with this hero, returned without ships, without his army, without his banners, and yet with the booty of a conqueror? He knew how to build and how to destroy a city, fight like a bull and play like a child, work his own fields and, at the sound of the lyre, to dream for days on end of the lands of green amber or of the women of far Atlantis mad with love. He knew how to laugh and weep unrestrainedly, like a girl, how to ask questions prudently and give absurd orders, to help the poor and to torture his own slaves. But the main thing was that there was no deceit or subterfuge that was unknown to him, no tortuous path, no concealed thought. What then was his secret, if custom, law and sentiment could not move him by a single millimetre from his silken path? An unbounded ingenuity and a heart of leather, that was it. If life was a sphere, then he was at its centre, and like a cunning worm he fed on the best part of it.

These were the thoughts of Phemius and the reasons why he believed he had reached the heart of the problem. But he was wrong, for among all his ideas about Odysseus he had still missed the most important. He realised this only a few months later, that morning of the autumn equinox when, after being summoned to the palace for the banquet in honour of the princes, he left it three hours afterwards, crawling like an ant half-squashed, with a deep wound in his back.

IT WAS THE FIRST FORMAL BANQUET since the King's return. The princes put on their ceremonial robes, Odysseus wore his golden tunic; and every detail of their jewellery, of their finery, and of the banqueting hall itself, seemed more than usually magnificent. But what difference could he notice, to begin with (beyond the unaccustomed display of riches), since everything was conducted according to custom—the sacrifice of the goat, Odysseus' speech, the praises of each prince proclaimed by the heralds, the praise of the King spoken by Phemius himself? Perhaps this: that Odysseus disappointed him by not giving the expected thanks to the elders of the Council, who during his long absence had ruled the city without causing any to bewail his absence (the elders were Ctesippus, Leodes and Pisander, sitting austerely beside him), causing more than one citizen to reflect that government by a few was certainly not worse than government by a single man. Or perhaps this: that not one of the princes was missing; or even that the spirits of all were high (though the circumstances might explain this—or, even better, the magnificent wine, of which the attendant girls never left the wine cups empty).

He had been called upon to sing, as was customary, and he had done so with his usual grace, but not for long; for he soon realised that nobody was listening to him any more, swollen as they were with food and drink and the heavy burden of lust, noticing only the bodies of the slavegirls—about which they had begun to quarrel. So Phemius put down his lyre and moved to one side, so that he could see the whole of the hall. There was an excess of everything—too many people, too much display, too much confusion. Nothing about it pleased him, nor did his own nervousness; and he was in this state of uneasiness when the abyss opened.

Already the uproar was beyond control, already many cups had been broken or hurled against the walls; already Amphimedontes and Euriades, both drunk, were ready to copulate with one of the women, when Phemius heard a metallic noise at his shoulder. The centre door, of which he could see only the upper part, was closing; and, above it, along the internal gallery, shadows moved behind the balustrade. The banquet was still raging in torpid debauchery—and because at that instant he realised that the seat of Odysseus was empty, a heavy anxiety came upon him; but he could not formulate the thought because he heard a whistle—the terrible whistle of the first arrows.

Archers, behind, above the entrance, appearing from nowhere. Ten archers, motionless on firmly-planted legs, who were once more bending their bows. There was no cry of pain, although Antinous was on his feet, grasping at the arrow that transfixed his throat; although Elatus and Agelaus, struck

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in the chest, moved their arms like windmills as they choked. Some had their mouths open—they would have cried out in another moment—but others were still asleep or eating or drinking. Euriades and the woman seemed to have reached their orgasm.

Such scenes, afterwards, are hard to describe; those drunken men wheeling about in an effort to escape, stumbling over their own dead and treading them under foot; those arrows, remorseless and accurate, so thick that they seemed to hide their faces. Amphinomus, who held his head between his hands, for it was split in two. Enclaus, with his own sword deep in his groin, seeing himself vomit out his food and his life; and all the others, like maddened calves in an enclosure, blinded; and the groans, and the wild calls for help, and the absurd curses. Phemius did not understand. He still did not understand. This was a nightmare, and his senses took it in as a whole—so why not close his eyes and shut himself off from it? But at this point there was a shout; and in what was shouted he heard his own name. Odysseus had appeared on the stairway, so it must have been Odysseus who called out to him: "Sing, Phemius!"—the King himself, armed—"Sing loud, whatever you like!"—his sword unsheathed against the defenceless men who seemed to stagger before him, calling perhaps for moderation or for mercy—and the first of these were Euriades and Ctenius of Leupidos, and Euriphilus the shepherd.

"Of Zeus the Father we know the justice" he began, his voice weak with the horror of the unclean trap, for those innocent men, for Megippus, the youngest, a boy, who before his eyes had reached one of the doors and slammed against it, and stayed there, nailed to it, where a bronze spear had pierced him with terrible force between the shoulder blades. And there was the courage of some, clear like the dawn, Leocritus and Evander with their daggers unsheathed against the archers; who struck them, who drew their short swords, who turned on the others like desperate wolves. Phemius sang and wept, and mixed with the verses a flood of tears when those two were laid low. After them, the massacre was almost over. But here he noticed the old men—Pisander, Leodes, Ctesippus, surrounded on all sides by death yet so far unharmed, and he feared terrible things for them, things that might be even worse.

His forebodings were justified; and hardly had every other voice fallen silent and every death-rattle ceased (for Telemachus, who followed his father, pierced every body a second time) than, as if obeying an order already given, the slaves seized them and bound them, after stripping them naked. Phemius pressed his palms against his eyes, but the sound of metal on flesh came to him clearly, and from the cries he understood that their throats were being cut. Then Odysseus spoke: "There, my good governors" he said, turning towards those miserable remains "is the King's reward for the ambitious!"

It was by now clear what his design had been; yet it was not one simple passion that dominated him; the unspeakable task had still to be completed. Some of the slavegirls were called, Iphilo and Gaddis, Xenia, Tannis and Lysia, twelve in all, the most beautiful, those who in years gone by had been generous of their favours to the princes, according to their custom. They were forced to drag the corpses of the noblemen into the courtyard, then to wash the floor; and when they had finished they were taken and hanged on the metal rings of the torches. Phemius' mind wavered; they did not use cords on them but the gut of oxen, and because of this they could not die, and kicked, and moved their limbs convulsively.

His spirit, his very spirit, failed him; but he knew very well that he was condemned. He had neither killed, nor insulted the dead, and he had witnessed every crime. He had not much time left. He rose, ran to the door, and with superhuman force lifted the bar (behind him he heard angry commands and threats). Eumaeus ran to him, and succeeded in half-closing the door. He had to turn. Avoiding the blow, he seized the sword from his hands and turned it against him, his luck holding. Then, quickly, he killed Philezius too, as he ran up; but not, alas, before he had struck Phemius a deep blow, so that his back was nearly broken.

He slid through the door. It was raining, and the square below was almost deserted. He dragged himself forward, until he fell backwards on the steps. At the mouth of the

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bay he saw three ships of his own people, the blood soaked his body, and with it his life was going fast. He saw his pursuers around him, and a shadow seemed to him to fall over his face. Nobody would hear his story, and so for nobody would he be able to solve the enigma of the fair ones, that secret which a sorceress had entrusted to him. He felt that they were holding him and lifting him off the ground. And in his mind, as it ceased to exist, this was his last memory; the words, once so real, of the sorceress: that the fair ones were the sons of Persephone and a serpent, that they had come from Hell, and that their aim was to corrupt and destroy the whole of life.

AFTER TWO DAYS HIS BODY was handed over to his relatives. They wept over it, anointed it with oil and honey, and burned it. One of his brothers collected the ashes in an urn, put out to sea, and scattered them in the water. A deep current carried them away, till they dropped over a wide area in a garden of sea-anemones, about two miles from the shore, directly ahead of the Eastern promontory.

Translated by Gavin Ewart

Karl Marx's Grave

I have always wanted to see
Karl Marx's grave.
I took three kids and a camera
to Highgate Cemetery
on a summer Sunday morning.
I guessed correctly
which side of the road
to look, and asked a sort of gardener
who didn't know anything.
Not a grave digger that one,
nor merry either.
"Must be right," I said,
"there are foreigners coming
up the path"—it was.
Dear God, I'm glad I wasn't Eleanor
and had to face that granite block
across the breakfast table.
But then, he was not
a larger than life stone bust,
just an extraordinary man.
Certainly that cemetery
is the most neglected
I have seen on either side
of any sea. My children were shocked
to watch me thoughtfully picking
my way back up the paths
by way of the blackberries
bedecking the graves.
"You can't eat those," they whispered;
"Nonsense," I said, and it's true,
I'm still alive.

Pamela Lewis

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Ferdinand Mount

The Recovery of Civility

Notes for the Long Trek Back

THERE IS NOTHING obscure about the quality of civility. Those who believe it to be an important and useful quality in politics know what they mean by it, or think they do. Civility is that mode of behaviour which makes civilisation possible. The features of this behaviour are: courtesy and consideration towards both individuals and groups, opponents as well as allies; modesty, restraint, and moderation both in speech and action; obedience to established rules of procedure and conduct. These attributes are not unconnected. Ortega y Gasset gives an impassioned definition of their common origin (in *The Revolt of the Masses)*:

> Restrictions, standards, courtesy, indirect methods, justice, reason! Why were all these invented, why all these complications created? They are all summed up in the word civilisation, which, through the underlying notion of *civis*, the citizen, reveals its real origin. By means of all these there is an attempt to make possible the city, the community, common life. Hence, if we look into all these constituents of civilisation just enumerated, we shall find the same common basis. All, in fact, presuppose the radical progressive desire on the part of each individual to take others into consideration. Civilisation is, before all, the will to live in common. A man is uncivilised, barbarian in the degree in which he does not take others into account. Barbarism is the tendency to dissociation.

In the flourishing city, civility is part of the air we breathe. We no more trouble to analyse it than we take a chemical sample of the atmosphere when we lean out of the window on a summer morning. The mere presence of a debate on civility is therefore a sign that the city is in danger—or at least that people fear so. Ortega y Gasset (writing in 1930) feared so, and rightly. That fear, almost entirely forgotten in the 1950s and early '60s, is with us again. It was of course revived by the now legendary events of the last few years—Detroit, the Sorbonne, the British miners' strike, and so on. But the fear has stayed with us through times of comparative quiet, exaggerating each manifestation of unrest, throwing huge shadows on to the wall.

THE FEARED LOSS OF CIVILITY has come to trouble the most unlikely minds. Last summer President Nixon professed himself a supporter of "the Stevensonian concept of 'civility'."[1] And in his second inaugural he said, "As America's longest and most difficult war comes to an end, let us once again learn to debate our differences with civility and decency . . .". However admirable the sentiments, even in a lifetime of giving offence to the liberal intelligentsia, Mr Nixon has rarely appeared more provocative. For define civility any way you like, there are still a lot of steers on the Nixon ranch which are precious difficult to manoeuvre into that particular corral. If civility is public courtesy, then the civilitarian does not talk about "bums on welfare." If it is precision of utterance and Socratic modesty, he does not describe the admittedly tremendous technical achievement of Apollo-11 as "the greatest week in the history of the world since the Creation." If it is obedience to established rules of political conduct, he does not intervene in the middle of a murder trail to abuse the defendant. When Mr Nixon let fly *in re* Charles Manson, he was not in effect worsening Manson's chances—juries might well react against such remarks—he was insulting due process. Civility is as much a question of courtesy to institutions as to individuals. In fact because politics presents individuals in a public and usually institutional setting, the two are inseparable. To call a man "the distinguished senator" or "the honourable member" is an act of civility to both. For that reason Mr Nixon's

[1] As reported in "How the President sees his Second Term" by Daniel P. Moynihan, *Life* Magazine, 1 September 1972.

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conduct in the Hiss affair was incivil, regardless of Alger Hiss's guilt.

In his television apologia for the Watergate affair, the President spoke of his wish "to establish a climate of decency and civility." Yet Watergate is almost a caricature of incivility. Mr Nixon's aides, it seems, refused to accept any restraints of law, morality or custom upon political warfare. One White House official is reported to have said, only half in jest, that he would trample on his own grandmother if it would help to re-elect the President. Even were we to acknowledge a certain traditional licence given to "dirty tricks" during an American election campaign, this bunch of hatchet men clearly trespassed well beyond the traditional limits. Mr Nixon now attacks the view that the end justifies the means in political campaigning. But it is too late. The damage to the fabric of civility is done. The hatchet men have chopped down the trees in George Washington's cherry orchard. There is no longer even anyone to say "I cannot tell a lie", nobody who will confess without being pushed.

By contrast Adlai Stevenson does seem a fair pattern of civility. As Roy Jenkins wrote recently:

> He was the direct opposite of the politicians who address everyone as though they were public meetings. His conversation was highly particularised. But his public face was also remarkably like his private face. As a result, while not lacking resonance, he came near to addressing public meetings as though they were individuals.... It was a voice which, even though it never achieved a position of full authority, helped to civilise and make more responsible this plenitude of American power.[2]

Stevenson showed to a remarkable degree several characteristics very unusual in a politician: a readiness to say "I don't know" in answer to questions, a disposition to stress the limits of what politics could achieve, an extreme courtesy to opponents and a willingness to acknowledge their good points, even when under political pressure to denigrate them. That is indeed civility.

BUT IS IT THE ONLY sort of civility, or even the most important sort? Turning from Mr Nixon's notorious failings to his achievements, or more precisely to the broad sweep of his style as President, we come upon a rather different political animal. We find an assiduity, an attentiveness in dealing with other régimes, political leaders, and political forces, which is undoubtedly a kind of civility, one indeed that Stevenson, whose courtesy reflected the grace of the wooed rather than the ardour of the wooer, conspicuously lacked. In his relations with Western Europe, for example, Mr Nixon has shown a continuing sensitivity. If a flight to the Azores can soothe ruffled French feathers, then the Azores it must be. The trip to China was essentially an exercise in civility, a successful effort to bring the largest nation on earth into the conversation, to make us familiar with what had previously been unknown and therefore unpredictable. At home Mr Nixon has been not only more diligent than most Presidents in attending to the chores of politics (outside Washington at least) but also more cheerful about it. For John Kennedy the tragic trip to Texas was all too obviously a reluctant tour of the provinces, a hike into Injun territory. Mr Nixon has improved upon his own natural preferences by setting up both a Southern and a Western White House—a sophisticated exercise in political sympathy which future Presidents should be wary of abandoning. But perhaps Mr Nixon's clearest claim to civility lies in his first inaugural speech:

> To lower our voices would be a simple thing. In these difficult years, America has suffered from a fever of words: from inflated rhetoric that promises more than it can possibly deliver... we cannot learn from one another until we stop shouting at one another—until we speak quietly enough so that our words can be heard as well as our voices... we cannot expect to make everyone our friends, but we can try to make no one our enemy.

These words echo W. H. Auden's dictum: "If you would civil our land, first you should civil your speech...."[3] And to the extent that Nixon's words expressed the mood of the time, they open up interesting lines of thought.

MR NIXON is a complex man: cautious, thoughtful, attentive but also quick-tempered, secretive, lacking in moral sensibility. This ambiguity is reflected in his conduct and in all the jokes about the old Nixon and the new Nixon. Daniel Moynihan says that the President is "immune to hate."[4] Being immune to hate takes something out of a man, according to Moynihan, but it also gives him a withdrawn quality of detachment,

[2] "Adlai Stevenson", *The Times*, 29 July 1972.
[3] In *Epistle to a Godson* (1972).
[4] In a BBC-TV interview on Mr Nixon's re-election, 7 November 1972.

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an inner strength, a kind of independence. It is, I think, this emptied detachment—the politician's counterpart of the poet's negative capability—which gives him the ability to pick on a feeling which is in the air and make it concrete. In this yearning for civility Mr Nixon is bringing to the surface a feeling which is common to both his supporters and his critics but which has lain buried because we are not certain quite how to voice it.

THERE IS NO PROBLEM in identifying the subject of complaint. On one level, it is the assumption by the supposedly literate young of the techniques of the mob—the shouting down of your opponents, the hounding of elderly professors for political reasons, the defecating in the dean's office, the use of arson, the abandonment of rational discourse in favour of chanted obscenities, the perversion of peaceful picketing into lynch law—and all this done not out of rowdyism or even "high spirits" but as a planned demonstration against the existing structure of society and its mores. Of course some of these things have happened before in connection with political demonstrations in support of some concrete grievance, but never all together and never with such ferocious intentionality and in the absence of anything more than trivial specific grievances. On another much more frightening but rather less puzzling level, the concern is with a world-wide upsurge of guerrilla movements, harsh and unrelenting in their use of violence and on occasion quite indifferent to any distinction between civilians and servants of the established régime, sometimes avowedly regarding all as "equally guilty" in the anarchist tradition.

Instead of a world in which, at least in industrialised counties, either there was War with certain concomitant rules and limitations or there was Peace, we now have a world continuously permeated by violence. It is not necessarily that more people are killed in total, but rather that there is no area of life, geographical or intellectual, which remains untouched: campus, street/avenue/boulevard, the sitting-room with its non-stop televised combat, both real and fictional; politics, the arts, economics, even theology. Instead of debating whether there can be such a thing as a Just War, radical and militant priests have called into question the possibility of a Just Peace.

THE CONSTITUENTS OF INCIVILITY are not in doubt. Nor is the strained, frenetic tone that they give to modern life. But what is the cause of it all? And if we are in danger of losing something precious, how are we to get it back again?

Irving Kristol, in his recent collection of essays, says

> An idea of self-government, if it is to be viable, must encompass both the private and the public sectors. If it does not—if the principles that organize public life seem to have little relation to those that shape private lives—you have "alienation", and *anomie*, and a melting away of established principles of authority.

This thought is elegantly incapsulated in the title of this particular essay: "When Virtue Loses All Her Loveliness." What Mr Kristol is really after is nothing less than the recovery of the moral dimension in politics. And he is prepared to take the consequences.

> ... the idea of progress in the modern era has always signified that the quality of life would inevitably be improved by material enrichment. To doubt this is to doubt the political metaphysics of modernity and to start the long trek back to premodern political philosophy—Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Hooker, Calvin, etc. It seems to me that this trip is quite necessary.[5]

That "etc." hides the precise location of the edge of the precipice. By such a casual abbreviation, Mr Kristol unintentionally minimises not only the length but the difficulty of "the long trek back." It is not simply a matter of retracing our steps but of climbing back up a rock-face down which we have just slithered with cheerful abandon. For two thousand years the most eminent and advanced thinkers had regarded the moral character of the ruler and of the ruling class as the central concern of political thought. Plato and Aristotle insisted that no state could survive for long unless its ruler was himself ruled by an externally given moral standard. The will to rule well was grounded in his moral duty towards his neighbour. In classical times this category of neighbour was restricted to the *isotimoi*, those worthy of equal respect with himself: in short, his peers. Stoic and Christian thought widened the category to include men of all nations and stations. This universality became more explicit and more important with the growth of modern humanism. For Plato, it was only among the guardians that no man

[5] Irving Kristol, *On the Democratic Idea in America* (1972), pp. 103, 106. See also the perceptive review by Edward Shils, ENCOUNTER, November 1972.

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would be a stranger to his fellows. Erasmus, on the other hand, says:

> For a pagan ruler it was perhaps enough that he should be kind to his own and merely just to strangers, but a Christian prince should regard no one as a stranger, except such as are alien to Christ's sacraments, and should not even inflict injury upon these. He will consider his own subjects first, of course, but do good to all whom he can serve.[6]

[6] *Institutio Principis Christiani* (tr. P. E. Corbett, 1921), p. 31.

THIS WIDENING OF SYMPATHIES is closely matched

On Freedom and

"HOWEVER *ridiculous some of these 'militant' students may have appeared,"* wrote *Professor Hans Eysenck in* ENCOUNTER *a few months ago* "they never for one moment indulged in, or even threatened, violence . . . never were my classes broken up. . . . There is obviously a rather more healthy liberal-democratic climate in England at the moment. . . ."*

As Randolph used to say: ho-bloody-ho. But if it is any consolation to Dr Eysenck (and in view of his relish of irony and allied qualities I rather think it may be), he does not hold the record for physical maltreatment by fascists of both right and left, despite the fact that as a young man he was set upon in Germany by Nazis and the day before yesterday he was knocked about at the London School of Economics by Communists, for the outstanding achievement in this field is that of a distinguished German Social-Democratic woman Senator who, having been beaten up before the war by Nazi storm-troopers, not only lived to be beaten up after it, in East Berlin, by Communist ones, but actually recognized, among the latter, a man who had been a member of the gang at whose hands she had suffered on the earlier occasion, and who had made the simple transition from one set of totalitarian masters to another, pausing only to visit the Quartiermeister *and get kitted out with a new uniform.*

On the other hand, however much consolation Dr Eysenck may derive from such demonstrations of the fact that whichever way you travel round a circle you come back to where you started from, I think there is precious little consolation for the rest of us in what happened to him. The refusal of a hearing to original or unpopular views (often unpopular, incidentally, with only a small minority) is not exactly a new phenomenon, as Socrates could testify, though there is something peculiarly repellent in the fact that so much of it, in recent years, has taken place at universities, and at universities in democratic countries, too. Still, even that has not, except sporadically, gone very far in Britain, and such violence as has ensued in the course of it has hitherto been of a generalized kind and has been an extension of the activities designed to prevent the speaker being heard; I think that Tuesday's scene at the LSE is the first occasion on which the violence has itself been the point of the activity, and if it is, Dr Eysenck has the melancholy distinction of being the first man in postwar Britain (but not, I fear, the last) to be beaten up solely because of the views he holds.

OR RATHER, BECAUSE *of the views he does* not *hold. Dr Eysenck's book* Race, Intelligence and Education [The I.Q. Argument *in the U.S.A.] discusses, dispassionately and humanely, the evidence for and against the belief that intelligence is to some extent genetically determined, and not solely the product of environmental conditions. Like Professor Arthur Jensen in the United States, Eysenck had seen the results of intelligence studies and tests in which Negro children there had scored consistently lower than white children of comparable environmental backgrounds, and in which Negro children had also done "worse" even when compared with white children living in decidedly inferior conditions, even—indeed particularly—when the tests were "culture-free". He had not concluded from this that black people are inferior as human beings to white people, or that racial segregation and discrimination are in any way justified, or that resources devoted to the education of Negroes are wasted, or that Negroes had gravitated to the deprived environments in which so many of them live because they were of low intelligence pre-determined by genetic factors. In many cases, Eysenck's views are* the exact opposite *of those attributed to him, not least, I regret to say, by an article on him and his book in* The Sunday Times, *which accused him of an "indiscriminate attack on attempts to improve Negro education on the grounds that the subjects may be too stupid to benefit from them".*

BUT THE FACT THAT *Eysenck did not hold the views attributed to him by people who had not read his work and in many cases would have been incapable of understanding it if they had, did not prevent—indeed, actively assisted—his categorization as a "racist" who argued that Negroes were sub-human and their oppression right. It was said after the attack on him at LSE that the thugs, whose fascist methods must have given him a sharp twinge of prewar nostalgia as well as a pain in the face, had come from Birmingham, and this would not be at all surprising, in view of the fact that when, not long after the publication of his book and the attacks on it, he had gone to give a lecture (unconnected with any*

* H. J. Eysenck, "The Dangers of the New Zealots", ENCOUNTER, December 1972.

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by a widening of the scope of courtesy. From the Renaissance onwards, forms of address which were previously restricted to and do indeed accurately describe members of the upper classes are increasingly applied to members of the middle classes and finally to everybody. From the 17th century on, "Mr" becomes the customary prefix for anyone below the rank of knight. In France "Monsieur" begins to undergo the same change about a century earlier. In Germany "Herr" becomes the universal form of address round about 1700; in Italy this happens to "Signor"

Professor Eysenck's Nose

racial matters) at Birmingham University, he was greeted by the distribution of leaflets by the "Progressive Intellectuals' Study Group (Birmingham)" which courteously and thoughtfully explained that:

> *"In an act of open provocation against the working people and all progressive honest scientists, a fascist and intellectual prostitute, parading as a 'professor of psychology', is coming to Birmingham University. . . . Wildly dreaming that the bourgeoisie will continue sucking the blood of the people forever, Eysenck does propaganda for the practical measures whereby the bourgeoisie can further manipulate the people. Eysenck is one of a band of soldout careerists who are parading as writers, scientists, scholars, etc. They have come forward to prostitute themselves in the service of imperialism."*

IT IS NO USE *simply dismissing as sick this appeal* to *the moron that lurks in us all* from *those in whom it has become dominant; it is scarcely more help to point out the parallels between such glorifications of unreason and the similar ones of the Nazis. Tolerance, freedom of speech, the right of choice, open debate and discussion, are things hated by those whose psychological inadequacies make it impossible to cope with them, and whose only solution to their own fear of the light is to embrace political systems which involve thrusting everybody else into the dark; and this lamentable tendency in societies such as ours is growing rather than diminishing. It is as yet confined to a tiny minority, but life in Britain is so organized that tiny minorities can, in situations such as that which Professor Eysenck faced, impose their will, at any rate for a short time, on majorities.*

It all comes back to what I was talking about, even while the gang was collecting to attack the Professor; namely the "devil-figure", who fills a political need (Jews, Freemasons, factory-owners, Negroes, pornographers, anti-pornographers, long-haired youths—the categories vary, and are added to, from time to time) and who, whatever he may in fact do or believe, *is thereafter, in the eyes of those whose need "his" particular diabolism fills, permanently categorized. . . .*

NOW ONCE THE DEVIL-PICTURES *are hung, facts which would involve their alteration or removal have to be denied; if the facts cannot be truthfully denied (as in Eysenck's views on race) they must be untruthfully denied; if, despite untruthful denials the facts survive, they must be ignored; if, despite being ignored, the facts cannot be successfully excluded from consideration, they must be shouted down; if the facts speak, though quietly, yet louder than the shouts, then they must be knocked down and kicked.*

Eysenck is not a racialist; but it has to be said that, even if he were, nobody would have any right to prevent others from hearing him, let alone to beat him up, any more than those who wish to call him a racialist ought to be prevented by suppression or violence from doing so. The criminal law is armed to catch those who stir up racial hatred, and the civil law is adequate to deal with those who describe as a fascist a liberal advocate of equality for people of all races and special help for the deprived. That, after all, is what the rule of law means—that anybody can operate within its framework, and nobody is allowed to prevent anybody else from doing so. Similarly, tolerance is defined not by the agreeable views which it permits us to hear but by the disagreeable ones. And from these two definitions a conclusion can be drawn, which was elegantly drawn many years ago: "Your fist's freedom ends where my nose begins".

DEMOCRACY IN BRITAIN *is not going to collapse merely because one professor is beaten up. But democracy is strong because it is a seamless robe; what is weaker, because it is a patchwork quilt, is freedom. Even if there is no repetition of such incidents, Eysenck was prevented from speaking, and injured to punish him for wishing to do so. He has, with characteristic imperturbability, refused to press charges against his assailants. But if they are allowed to get away with what they did, does anybody believe they, or others like them, will not repeat such behaviour? For what they assaulted on Tuesday was not just a professor, and not just free speech, and not just the rights of others. It was reason itself. Reason, in a peaceful and democratic country like Britain, has to put up with assaults by the words of those who fear and hate it. But it does not have to put up with their boots and fists, and the rest of us have not just a right, but a duty, to see that it does not. If the gang can be identified, the law must proceed against them.*

Bernard Levin

in THE TIMES (London)

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rather later, although the situation is complicated by the special position of "Messer." This kind of formality marks the beginning of an enlarged political community. And it certainly does not take place without grumblings from those who feel themselves threatened by the pretensions of the new gentry. "These days every churl calls himself Herr/Monsieur/Signor/Mr" was a common complaint throughout Europe—a complaint still to be heard in Britain today about the promiscuous use of "Esquire" in addressing a letter.

For the radical, both of the Right and of the Left, such usages are some of the most loathsome symbols of the bourgeois world. They must speedily be replaced by *Citoyen*, Comrade or, ideally, nothing at all. It is the common denominator of fascists and communists that they talk in surnames—an important and nigh infallible indicator, in fact. Recently I switched on the television at random and saw a film clip of a middle-aged soberly dressed man making a political speech. Before him was a table draped with a Union Jack and an equally sober-suited audience. The speech appeared to be an unexceptionable version of the patriotic theme—"the Need to Make this Country Great Again." I assumed the programme to be a documentary about the Conservative Party, until the speaker referred derisively to "Wilson and his gang." In a flash it was clear that the meeting was of some branch of the British fascists; the rhetoric had been cleaned up and quietened down for television, but the speaker was unable to cut out the reflex discourtesy. By contrast, *The Times* continues heroically to prefix the name of almost every human being; the Admiralty spy, for example, is, as he always was, "Mr Vassall."

This historical broadening of courtesies—of which *The Times*'s practice represents the full flowering—was no mere grudging obeisance of the old élites towards their new audiences. It was a direct and inevitable consequence of the transformation of political theory and structure. The extension of civility to new classes implied their inclusion in the same moral universe as the previous governing class. Their rights and duties had a common source in the natural law—rights and duties which were, so to speak, codified in the natural law. Social distinctions remained, of course, but they were allegedly justified by their moral origin and the moral responsibilities they carried with them. Sir Thomas Elyot writes:

> . . . in the beginning when private possessions and dignity were given by the consent of the people, who then had all things in common, and equality in degree and condition, undoubtedly they gave the one and the other to him at whose virtue they marvelled, and by whose labour and industry they received a common benefit, as of a common father that with equal affection loved them. And that promptitude or readiness in employing that benefit was then named in English gentleness, as it was in Latin *benignitas*, and in other tongues after a semblable signification, and the persons were called gentlemen, more for the remembrance of their virtue and benefit, than for discrepance of estates. Also it fortuned by the providence of God that of those good men were engendered good children, who being brought up in virtue, and perceiving the cause of the advancement of their progenitors, endeavoured themselves, by imitation of virtue, to be equal to them in honour and authority; by good emulation they retained still the favour and reverence of people. And for the goodness that proceeded of such generation the state of them was called in Greek *eugenia*, which signifieth good kind or lineage, but in a more brief manner it was after called nobility, and the persons noble, which signifieth excellent, and in the analogy or signification it is more ample than gentle, for it containeth as well all that which is in gentleness, as also the honour or dignity therefore received, which be so annexed the one to the other that they cannot be separate.[7]

The correct behaviour of a governor was but an emanation or "fume" of his moral character—smoke rising from the fire in the heart. Conduct and character were in harmony because they were one. The fact that all men were equal in the sight of God entailed equality of respect for them in daily life, or what Elyot calls "affability." He defines this quality with etymological precision as "where a man is facile or easy to be spoken unto", not as *Webster's Dictionary* says "being pleasant and at ease in talking *to* others." It is the good listener who gets results. Erasmus says, "Civility everywhere arouses love, or at least softens hatred, and is indeed the quality in a great Prince which most appeals to the commonalty", and "civility invites civility." Elyot remarks "affability is of a wonderful efficacy or power in procuring love. . . . How often have I heard people say, when men in great authority have passed by without making gentle countenance to those which have done to them reverence: 'This man weeneth with a look to subdue all the world; nay, nay, men's hearts be free, and will love whom they list' . . ." but "When a noble man passeth by, showing to men a gentle and familiar visage, it is a world to behold how

[7] Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Governour* (1531; Everyman ed. 1907), pp. 126–7. I have modernised the spelling.

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people taketh comfort, how the blood in their visage quickeneth, how their flesh stirreth, and hearts leapeth for gladness."

HERE WE COME TO A GREAT SPLIT in the tradition of civility, a split which in a way only serves to emphasise the moral basis of the tradition. Granted that civility is the most effective means of governing, of procuring the consent and cooperation of the people, is it then not legitimate and even desirable to use it simply as a technique, a trick of the political trade, freed of its old links to an external moral standard which may turn out to be shackles on effective action? In other words, should the Prince lie if it will help his cause? May he dupe the people?

Yes, say Plato and Machiavelli. The ruler (or ruling class) is not as other men are. His destiny and responsibility are greater. He cannot be bound by the moral shackles which rightly fetter lesser men. By contrast, for the Christian humanist tradition the ruler is a man like others whose "destiny" like theirs is simply to do his duty as best he can. Elyot puts the latter view with resounding emphasis: "Truly in every covenant, bargain or promise ought to be a simplicity, that is to say, one plain understanding or meaning between the parties. And that simplicity is properly justice . . . all deceit and dissimulation, in the opinion of them which exactly honour justice, is nearer to dispraise than commendation, although that thereof might ensue something that were good. For in virtue may be nothing fucate [artificial, painted] or counterfeit." He quotes Cicero's view "that reason requireth that nothing be done by treason, nothing by dissimulation, nothing by deceit" and that "Nature is the fountain whereof the law springeth."[8]

TWO CENTURIES LATER BOLINGBROKE, though renowned as a sceptic and a reprobate, gives his "anti-Machiavel" as resounding a moral force as the pious, respectable Elyot. In *The Idea of a Patriot King* (written in 1738 but not published until 1749) he follows all the traditional arguments linking nature, reason and virtue. He asserts that the art of government can never be divorced from morality, both public and private. Even Machiavelli, he says, "declares the affectation of virtue to be useful to princes. . . . The only difference between us is, I would have the virtue real: he requires no more than the appearance of it. . . . But he is far from going up to that motive which should above all determine a good prince to hold this conduct, because it is his duty to do so; a duty that he owes to God by one law, and to his people by another."[9] In the case of the Patriot King, on the other hand "the constitution will be reverenced by him as the law of God and of man; the force of which binds the king as much as the meanest subject, and the reason of which binds him much more."[10]

As Jeffrey Hart has pointed out,[11] it is a mistake to dismiss Bolingbroke's treatise as a collection of commonplaces (as J. H. Plumb does in his book on *The Four Georges*). It *is* full of commonplaces, but Bolingbroke *intended* his arguments to be recognised as a reassertion of the familiar, traditional position, which he believed to be under attack not just from Machiavelli but from Walpole and the whole corrupt Hanoverian world of "interest." And whatever his personal motives for the polemic, he had the true instinct of the disappointed man, the gift of seizing upon something important about his times. For it is indeed here or hereabouts that the externally given moral basis of civility in politics begins to peter out. Even before *The Idea of a Patriot King* was published, Hume had written:

> Among the arts of conversation, no one pleases more than mutual deference or civility, which leads us to resign our own inclinations to those of our companions, and to curb and conceal that presumption and arrogance so natural to the human mind.[12]

This definition foreshadows many of the utilitarian tendencies of the modern, disenchanted world. Civility is now justified in terms of mutual satisfaction and psychological adjustment. Instead of moral commandments, we are told to heed the lessons of experience; the social sciences replace the tablets of the law. The notion of civility loses the moral grandeur of its origin and begins to evoke an image of slippered toleration—agreeable enough but by reason of its very neutrality fatally open to attack from any really effective moral imperative. Civility strolls into middle age, shedding those high-spirited qualities which made Castiglione's Courtier a

[8] Elyot, *The Governour*, pp. 208–9.
[9] Bolingbroke, *Works*, vol. IV (1809), pp. 257, 259.
[10] Bolingbroke, *Works*, vol IV, p. 263.
[11] Jeffrey Hart, *Viscount Bolingbroke, Tory Humanist* (1965), p. 119.
[12] David Hume, "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences", *Works* (1882 ed.), Vol. III, p. 187.

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model to the young. As a result the young become easy meat, suckers for any ideological soldier of fortune who knows how to assume a high moral tone and an air of certainty.

HUME WAS, OF COURSE, atypical in the vigour of his secularism. But the image of civility evoked by "reasonable" Christians of the 18th century, such as Addison, is also essentially secular. *The Spectator* preached a code of behaviour which had its moral echoes but which was to be judged and modified more by the convenience of the social conditions it helped to create than by an externally given moral standard. As Peter Gay has pointed out (ENCOUNTER, December 1967), these conditions of social peace and cohesion were much to be desired in an age where revolution was still a living memory. If political force was the midwife of the new order, Addison was its nanny. He was a genuinely civilising force. But he drew his strength from his times. As soon as the fears of anarchy faded, the benefits of civility naturally came to be taken for granted. Its forms were no longer seen as the signs and preconditions of a healthy society; they were fossilised into mere etiquette. In such a situation, civility begins to become fatally open to attack. For a fossilised form is unlikely to correspond with the shape of a changing society. Mr Gay rightly says that "We patronise Addison at the peril of surrendering our historical perspective." But if we were to take Addison as a guide to conduct today, we *would* be justified in regarding him as smug, complacent, Victorian. By casting civility in a social rather than a moral framework, he abandons the claim to have provided an eternal definition. His temporal, secular standards are liable to decay and pass away with the age which gave birth to them.

Yet while we might criticise the political implications of Addison's attitudes, until recently most literate people in the West would have approved the *tone* of his civility—the atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect. The new factor today is the emergence of a body of opinion which considers Addison's tone as false as his politics, which in effect rejects altogether the notion of civility as a good or as a necessary constituent of the good society. In fact, this generation (for we may take it in crudely generational terms, as its members themselves do) thinks its parents and elder brothers as smug as its parents and elder brothers think Addison.

For this generation the tradition of civility is an empty husk. The kernel—the genuine moral impulse—has long since withered. It is time for the wrinkled shell of courtesy to be thrown into the dust-bin of history. In its present context, it is nothing but a covering for oppression and deceit. The real aim of the man who represses himself in the guise of civility is to repress others without seeming to do so. In this way the forms of civility may promote the very barbarism to which they are supposed to be the antidote. The civilitarian's answer to this is, of course, that true civility can never have such results because it is simply the continuous expression of moral feeling. Civility does not and could not require that you should smile and raise your hat to a man who is beating his child, or that you should respond with polite alacrity to a request to come and lend a hand with the gas ovens. The Nuremberg question is age-old; very few people at any time in history would wish to say that there are absolutely no limits on the duty of civil obedience.

To all this the anti-civilitarian retorts sharply: "What evidence have you that civility does any good? What reason is there to think that it is a cause rather than an effect of stability, security, and economic advance? Too often civility seems to enable people to get away with murder instead of discouraging the practice. I see in history only a long sequence of oppression and the fossilised forms of civility with which men have tried to hide that oppression from both their victims and themselves. Where is this moral impulse which is supposed to animate those forms?"

In many ways the odd thing is not that so many people should think like this but that they should have begun to do so only in the last few years. It is, after all, a very long time since the idea of civility was given constant nourishment from the roots of human belief, since language and law and custom all animated and clothed a divine moral order. For two centuries at least the moral traditions of civility have been bereft of support from the leading thinkers of the day. In fact to say "bereft of support" is to palter with meiosis. The main tendencies of political thought since 1750 have been to strike directly and ferociously at the moral autonomy of the self, at the belief that you yourself decide what you do and say and that your decision is of eternal consequence.

More important still, modern political thought diminishes the sense of other individuals. In shouting obscenities at the harmless dean, to

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choose the current *locus classicus*, you are shouting not at a bewildered and frightened middle-aged man but at Establishment/Authority/System/Structure; you must be or you wouldn't shout at him, it being cruel and absurd to do so. Such an abstract mode of thinking is common not only to the apocalyptic theories of politics (which the civilised man can cheerfully dismiss as nutty) but also to the language of sociology (which the civilised man uses equally cheerfully every day). Every time that one is encouraged to think of a person as representative of a class, as an element in a trend, an embodiment of a tradition or a categorical problem, one becomes that much less responsive to the awkward, bulky, irreducible fact of *himself*. Even by using the words which are supposed to denote that fact—personality, individuality—we begin to float into abstraction again.

THE PURPOSE OF MORALITY is to guide our relations with other persons; it demands therefore a vivid sense of their presence if it is to be anything more than a set of instructions as formal and desiccated as those in a car manual. Civility, being a workaday reflection of morality, makes the same demand. This sense is lacking from most modern political creeds. "The greatest happiness of the greatest number is the foundation of morals and legislation" is a statement about masses, not about your neighbour.

Yet a sense of the concrete reality of other persons does survive in the common practice of the West, in politics as well as in daily life.

We are able to perceive Rudolf Hess as an old man wandering in his wits and no longer simply as an embodiment of Nazi evil. Governments are sometimes moved to let in an agitator who is openly sworn to smash the System (any system) but who at this particular moment is being persecuted by another government. In expropriating those whom it regards as expropriators, a socialist government sometimes designs loopholes to mitigate the shock to elderly widows or to farmers who have spent their life on the land. Such is our reluctance to admit a moral basis for politics that we frequently discuss such events as if they were merely logical extensions of political systems such as "democracy" or "the open society", instead of being directly deducible from a moral principle. Of course it is possible so to define your political system that it includes charity or the duty to your neighbour, but it is still the shared moral impulse which makes the public insist that the government should show the same charity that would be expected of a private person in similar circumstances.

CIVILITY SURVIVES as yet, sometimes in unexpected situations, sometimes swamping the *realpolitiker* with unexpected passion. How, and why, does it keep going in an age whose language is sociological abstraction and whose dominant image of society is the mechanised anthill? Perhaps we should remember here the very unequal pace of change.

If "the world of politics is always twenty years behind the world of thought", the world of education may be centuries away from the advanced thinkers of the day. A school conducted precisely according to the doctrines of David Hume would even today be regarded as on the progressive side. Sir Ernest Barker noted that *The Introduction to the Code*—the code of regulations for elementary schools first published in 1904—with its emphasis on the training of character through the development of the intelligence could have been written by Aristotle.[13] Again it would be hard for a layman to give a date for the Latin injunction still used on the admission of scholars to Eton College which can be roughly translated thus:

> May you be a good boy, docile and modest, growing up so piously and purely among your equals that you may go forth from your education an honest member of society and a useful citizen of your country, to the greater glory of God.[14]

Around 1440 when the school was founded? Or 1540 in the age of treatises on education like Elyot's *Governour* and Ascham's *Scholemaster*? Or 1840 in the heyday of Arnold's Rugby? In fact the words appear to be based on a rather shorter injunction allegedly given by King Henry VI, the founder of Eton, to boys visiting Windsor Castle; but they were first used for the present purpose in the early years of this century—perhaps just as John Dewey was completing *Democracy and Education*. The moral tradition as well as its civil consequences seemed to both the secretaries of the Board of Education and the masters of Eton to need no change either of form or of content over the centuries. Both man's duty towards his neighbour and the purposes of education were regarded as essentially timeless.

[13] Ernest Barker, *Traditions of Civility* (1948), p. 16–17.

[14] I must thank the Provost and Fellows of Eton for permission to quote this and Mr Patrick Strong, the college librarian, for his help in tracking down the obscure origin of this custom.

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THE REVOLUTION IN EDUCATION is remarkably recent. At a stroke it has shattered the stasis of centuries. In less than 50 years the aims and methods of education have been transformed. The new tradition selects from the many strands of the old tradition the training of the critical faculty. It encourages an open, sceptical cast of mind, alert and enquiring in disposition. It lays stress upon the energetic and aggressive aspects of mental activity rather than upon the contemplative and receptive aspects. It rejects efforts to instil moral or religious teaching as deplorable brainwashing. It exalts above all others the capacity to think for oneself. This is, of course, something of a caricature; modern theorists of education would certainly claim that their methods improve the child's ability to appreciate the arts and cultures not his own. All the same, by comparison with the old tradition it is the concentration upon the critical faculty that must strike the observer.

PAULO FRIERE, the Brazilian theorist of education who is now much in vogue among Marxists in the Americas, argues that education is either for "liberation" or "domestication." It is only by critical intervention in reality that men can become truly human. "Liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information. . . . The students—no longer docile listeners—are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher." By contrast, traditional education "is suffering from narration sickness." The student's mind is treated like a bank in which the teacher makes deposits. And this is far from accidental:

> It is not surprising that the banking concept of education regards men as adaptable, manageable beings. The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them. The capacity of banking education to minimize or annul the students' creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed. The oppressors use their "humanitarianism" to preserve a profitable situation. Thus they react almost instinctively against any experiment in education which stimulates the critical faculties.[16]

[16] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Penguin, 1972), pp. 45–54. See also Freire's *Cultural Action for Freedom* (Penguin, 1972).

Freire's use of "domestication" is an effective polemical metaphor, because the notion does genuinely contain part but only part of what traditional teachers have meant by "the civilising function of education." It is for example the kind of thing that must have been in Henry VI's mind when he prayed that his college at Eton might instil "religion and sound learning." The aim of education is to fit man to live in society, yes, to tame him, domesticate him, if you like. The wilderness is for wild beasts; civilisation demands the domestic virtues. Anyway, what evidence have we to suppose that the liberation of man in this sense would be so desirable? May we not be unleashing dark passions rather than freeing man to be "truly human"? Freire pre-empts these questions in the same way that Rousseau did. "*Everywhere* man is in chains." For Freire even the Indians in the remotest jungles of the Amazon have been denatured, reduced to silence by the oppressor. We don't know whether a truly liberated man would be a noble savage or not, because there are no truly liberated men and can be none until all men are liberated. Those who raise doubts about the wisdom of liberation must then do so simply because they are oppressors who wish to continue oppressing, for no man of good faith could wish to keep people in chains. Civility is the badge therefore not only of hypocrisy but also of oppression.

A WATERED-DOWN VERSION of Freire's doctrine is commonplace in both Europe and America now. From the voyage of self-discovery in the kindergarten to the "critical intervention in reality" of the adolescent sociologist whose holiday project is to grill his neighbours on their mores, the progressive teacher's aim is to help the child liberate himself from the preconceptions of the world into which he was born, or at any rate to stand outside them so that he may judge them dispassionately.

If we want to look for the reason why civility has so suddenly lost credit with the young, it is worth studying the way in which the great critical theories of society impinge upon minds which have been trained to strike these almost exclusively critical attitudes. There are two such kinds of impact which are particularly calculated to erode the traditions of civility in both public and private life.

The first is what Elie Kedourie has called "the new vulgar Marxism." This is the belief that all statements and actions are completely explicable in terms of the social position of the speaker or

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agent, most obviously in terms of his own social class but also in terms of his historical situation generally. This also translates neatly into the jargon of behaviourism: catch the rat in this sort of trap and he will invariably react in this sort of way. Such an analysis is virtually immune to rebuttal. Naturally we will greet with some scepticism the denials of a senator who is accused of corruption. Most of us will, however, be prepared to take note of evidence supporting his claim to be innocent. But for the vulgar Marxist the scepticism is total. It is not just a question of his murmuring "no smoke without fire"; from his point of view, it is the historical function of senators, having at their disposal such wealth and power, to rob the poor. Whether thereby they break the laws they themselves have made is a trumpery distinction. When we see a senator refusing to take a bribe, we can be sure that he is doing so merely in order to enjoy the fruits of some other form of exploitation with greater impunity.

Such reflex cynicism, such devouring mistrust follows inevitably from a standpoint that denies all absolute and permanent moral values. It is a peculiarly attractive posture for a tender, unformed mind, having as it does the supreme virtue of providing a single effortless explanation for almost everything. The sociology of knowledge is a delightful substitute for knowledge itself.

THE SECOND ACID eating into the tradition of civility is the modern quest for sincerity. The history of this tendency is well described and criticised by Lionel Trilling in his lectures on *Sincerity and Authenticity*[16]. Its effect here is plain.

Civility demands that on frequent occasions your first loyalty is not to the unfettered expression of your own sensations, emotions and desires, but to other principles such as tolerance, respect, and even love for your neighbour. On the calculus of civility it may be your duty to pretend to a sympathy you do not feel, to hold back, to refrain from saying or doing all that you would like to, to say and do things that you would not have done left to yourself, in general to settle for half a loaf rather than all or nothing. For those who regard sincerity as the supreme good this is blasphemy. The profession of what you do not believe is hypocrisy, the sin against the light. The suppression of the pure impulse is rank inauthenticity; the acceptance of compromise is the mark of the bourgeoisie.

Vulgar Marxism proclaims that the civilitarian's overriding values are phoney because bound by time and class; his liberty, bourgeois liberty; his logic, bourgeois logic; and so on. But the charge made by the worshipper of sincerity is graver still. In his eyes the sacrifice that the civilitarian makes to these overriding values is not of some lesser or even equivalent virtue. It is the sacrifice of man's most precious possession, indeed his only possession of any real value—the authenticity of his self. The civilitarian is dishonest both in the sense that he is not wholly sincere and in the sense that he pretends that values which are merely transient, contingent on a particular social structure, are eternally valid.

In the end the two critiques of civility come to merge, Marx with Rousseau, Sartre with R. D. Laing. Caught in the glare of their powerful twin searchlights, what a pitiable figure the civilitarian makes! Smug, stale, timid, hypocritical, fraudulent, concealing his true motives both from others and from himself, disloyal to his own consciousness, insincere, inauthentic, hyena, jackal, running dog, lackey, m———f——— b———, . . . The chorus of imprecation rises to a scream.

AND THERE IS NO CHANCE of the accused defending himself, no chance of refuting the charge against him, for his defence, his attempted refutation, would itself be tainted with the sin for which he is condemned without trial. Mr Norman St John-Stevas recently rose to give his first speech since being appointed Joint Under-Secretary of the Conservative Government's Department of Education. The occasion was the dedication ceremony of the North London Polytechnic. Alas, as Mr Stevas rose, so did the President of the Students' Union, a Mr Povey, and attempted to speak instead. So too did a sizeable number of the students, shouting "*Povey, Povey*!" and "*Stevas out*!" In fact it was Mr Povey who was carried out struggling. Routine stuff. But the poignant feature of the occasion was the speech that Mr Stevas then attempted to shout through a microphone:

> I want to make it plain that I am and always have been very sympathetic to the student point of view. I appreciate and value their attitude to life and the importance they attach to genuineness and sincerity and their desire not to be stereotyped.[17]

[16] Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (1972).
[17] As reported in the London *Evening Standard*, 28 November 1972.

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Not spitting into the wind exactly, more like bleating into the hurricane—but doomed, hopelessly doomed. What value could flattery from so tainted a source conceivably possess? The dishonest have no rights. Povey for ever! Caliban for President!

THE NOTION OF HONESTY has travelled far since Elyot wrote, following Seneca, "What thing is more honest than to be kind, like as nothing is so dishonest as to be unkind?"

Century by century, the meaning of honesty has narrowed. Once it signified moral distinction in its widest sense, the attribute of Aristotle's great-souled man. Then the notion of nobility drained out of it and honesty came to mean right conduct and truthfulness; and now for many people "to be honest" means simply "to be honest with oneself." The moral universe is emptied of everything but a consciousness relentlessly interrogating itself; it is a dry, savage place.

Sincerity is, of course, a central theme in the Judaeo-Christian-Humanist tradition. But when narrowed and eventually cut off from its source in the natural law, it is inexorably transformed into the self-validating quality of authenticity. We should not, however, delude ourselves about this. This cutting off may dry up the qualities of warmth and humanity which were once inherent in the idea of sincerity, but it also frees the idea to rove over the whole of human experience with a terrible inquisitorial eye. The authenticity critique may be narrow, but it is no good underestimating its power.

The critique is well able to deal swiftly and ruthlessly with most of the aspects of social life that stare us in the face. In Russia, for example, all official statements, all government newspapers are riddled with lies. Leonid Vladimirov, in his authoritative account of how the Soviet censorship works,[18] records that without special government permission it is forbidden to publish any information about earthquakes and other natural disasters in the USSR, reports of fires, explosions, aeroplane, naval and mine disasters, rail accidents, the earnings of government and party workers, any information at all about price increases or food shortages, and so on and so on. Add to this massive exercise in *suppressio veri* the even vaster exercise in *suggestio falsi* and the Soviet citizen is presented with such a total distortion of reality in all the officially approved media that the first essential for a Russian writer is to tell the truth. A scorching belief in authenticity is both a necessary and a sufficient condition of any worthwhile literary achievement.

IN THE WEST the situation is very different but still offers plenty of opportunities for the detection of insincerity. You can be repelled by the old-fashioned posturing of the politicians or nauseated by the more modish pretensions of advertising and showbiz. The fact that the purveyors of commercial insincerity are well aware of the critique to which they will be subjected only adds a further degree of melancholy horror to their productions. Nik Cohn reports on the making of the film of *Jesus Christ, Superstar*:

> "'We could have played this for cheap,' says Norman Jewison, who is directing and co-producing. 'It would have been the easiest thing in the world—milk it for camp and sensation. Mary Magdalene could have gone down on Jesus, right there on the cross, and half the apostles are gay, and look at Jesus and Judas, wouldya, two grown men kissing, smack on the lips. Oh yeah, we could have been vulgar, all right, we could have been really outrageous. But instead we chose to play it straight. Be real. Involve ourselves. Care. That's why we came to the Holy Land and it's beautiful, and what we're doing is beautiful. Beauty is a kinda hard word to use these days but I'm not ashamed of it—a whole lot of people are going to be deeply moved by this film, a lot of people will find themselves destroyed. People who never even cared before. People who always thought JC was a schmuck. When they see the sincerity, the beauty of Superstar, they're gonna fall apart.'"[19]

For hubristic cant there is little to choose between this and the following recent piece of advertising copy:

> At Littlewoods we believe we've been fortunate. Among the dark suits and trim haircuts of our management trainees, you'll find compassion and concern and anger. These men are not administrative robots but self-controlling individuals who find that, in our company, the world of modern retailing gives them all the chances they could want to serve others and improve what they see around them.

I culled the latter example from the British satirical fortnightly *Private Eye* whose "Pseud's Corner" is a running anthology of inauthenticity. The items are sent in by readers; most of those printed are gloriously absurd, but every now and

[18] See *Index* (on Censorship), Vol 1, No. 3/4 (Autumn/Winter, 1972)
[19] In *Harper's Bazaar/Queen*, December 1972.

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then you come upon one or two that aren't. The item may be a genuine but awkwardly phrased expression of emotion, perhaps a rather clumsy flight of fancy, or sometimes even a quite straightforward attempt to put over a complicated point in an argument, but clearly there is nothing pseudish about it. At such moments you suddenly feel the unseen presence of a baleful jury of readers—philistine, incurious, reductivist, above all determined that nobody shall be allowed to get away with anything.

Of course such Jacobin minds can quite easily be blown by any passing charlatan. On the whole, the dottier the shaman, the faster click the turnstiles. But it is rather harder to enlarge these contracted selves by rational discourse. Their hearts "leapeth for gladness" at the inanities of Superstar rather than at the sager complexities of Erasmus or, come to that, W. H. Auden. Ideas which were common currency for 2000 years are simply not in their vocabulary; the idea of a natural order and a natural law, the ideas of human destiny and of individual moral obligation are written off as cant, hogwash.

BUT ARE SUCH HIGHFLOWN IDEAS really essential to the maintenance of a civil community? After all, doesn't middle age make civilitarians of us all? There is surely a sense in which age and experience do fit our minds both to be governed and to govern; they teach us to reduce our expectations, to fit our desires to our deserts, to limit ourselves.

It would be nice to think that nature had left us with such an in-built governor. But the example of Nazism—the very pattern of fulfilled will, of national authenticity—gives us no scope to do so. At its peak Hitler's appeal was ageless and classless. Middle age makes us civilitarians only to the extent that the years provide evidence to support the great ideas of Western civilisation; they confirm what we were taught in school and then forgot or discarded as stale and outworn. In talking about civility President Nixon is still preaching mostly, not to the converted, but to the lapsed. The schoolteachers have, however, been changed since his day. We are in missionary country now, where everything has to be made from scratch. It is a long trek back.

Or perchance not

Work—say I, coining a phrase
In the firm's money—is the
Curse of the dreaming classes.
It makes me sleep like the dead.
Where are they now, those bright
And fearful dreams I used to live?
Ingenious phantoms who conveyed
So much reality?

Dreaming will have to stop—
So says reality, aggrieved,
Wet blanket on my bed,
The tired dog in my manger.
I work, therefore for tax and
Other purposes, I am.
Then I sleep the sleep of the just,
Which is death.

D. J. Enright

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Column

LIKE A MOVIE SERIAL, Watergate continues to unwind, and each episode leaves its hero, or villain, desperately cliff-hanging in situations which, under any other conditions, would inevitably lead to his destruction. But so far it is only the attendant lords who have been destroyed, and at the moment Prince Hamlet is still dizzily poised over the abyss. How long he can maintain his precarious position, and with what consequences, nobody knows.

The comparison with Hamlet is not altogether extravagant because, after all, the play is essentially the drama of a court. Behind the battlements of Elsinore, screened from the inquisitive eyes of his subjects, a king and his courtiers enact a tragedy of murder, incest, lust and revenge, and when finally Fortinbras bursts in on the corpse-strewn stage, it is as if the doors of the castle had been flung open to let the fresh sea-breezes in and purify the thick and suffocating atmosphere.

So it is, or was, in Watergate, even though they may arrange things rather differently in the White House from the way they did in Elsinore. No corpses as yet litter the scene, though somehow in the last few weeks one would hardly have been surprised if they did, and in any case there are quite a few politically dead men around. But the atmosphere and the *mise-en-scène* are essentially the same: the king aloof in his majesty, feigning ignorance of the whispers, insinuations, gossip, intrigues which fill the rooms and corridors of the palace; the secret conferences and conclaves; the courtiers huddled in corners trying to guess the wishes of the king; or the plots of those who wish to dethrone him, the arbitrary acts of violence, the rats scuffling behind the arras, the lies, the deceit, the covert struggle for places and power, the crimes concealed behind the panoply of royalty.

It is, I think, the glaring spotlight suddenly concentrated on a king and his court, as if indeed they had been exposed on a stage, which has so shocked, bewildered and fascinated Americans since the Watergate affair first began to demand public notice. Of course, the king in this case goes by the name of a President, but the assumption of absolute personal power, exercised through men who are purely the creatures and creations of the monarch, is precisely that of one who rules by divine right and, confident in the sacred origin of his power, feels bound by respect neither for law nor for the rights of his subjects. There are indeed those, like Dr A. L. Rowse and Mr Bernard Levin, who hasten to assure us (in *The Times*) that all this is as it should be; that a few minor peccadilloes by the President's staff do nothing to obscure or diminish the might and majesty of the United States or the skill, patience, and determination with which President Nixon and his personal foreign secretary, Dr Kissinger, have succeeded in assuring the peace of the world. This is indeed to be *plus royaliste que le roi.*

NOR, I THINK, do many Americans agree with Dr Rowse and Mr Levin in their dismissal of Watergate as a little local trouble of no more than minor importance. Those I have met recently in London have worn a slightly bewildered and bemused expression, as if they were not quite sure what their appropriate reaction to Watergate should be. Some have taken refuge in the kind of cynicism displayed by President Nixon himself in saying, in his television address to the American people, that, after all, Watergate is only one example of the kind of practices employed by all American political parties, and politicians, as if illegality and contempt for the rights of others were an in-built feature of the American political system. When the President himself shows such contempt for the constitution, how can he expect others to respect it?

Other Americans have resorted to indignation, and place the blame exclusively on President Nixon's personal character, which the most charitable describe as "deeply enigmatic" and the less charitable as shoddy and disreputable. Yet others have said that the President having, like Grant and Harding, put his trust in, and been deceived by, bad men, he must now take the consequences; and the most one could hope was that they would not be too serious. But I have not as yet found anyone who belived that it was still possible to sweep Watergate under the carpet as a minor blemish on the record of an otherwise highly successful administration.

THE QUESTION, I think, which Americans, and others who, despite Watergate, continue to believe that the United States still represents the last, best hope of mankind, should ask themselves is: how was it possible for Watergate to have occurred at all? For the answer, I think, should show that Watergate is a consequence, not of President Nixon's personal weaknesses, though these are considerable, nor of those of his staff, nor of anything peculiar to the Republican party or a Republican administration, nor even the taint of corruption which, if we are to believe President Nixon, clings to American politics as a whole.

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Anyone looking for an answer to that question could not do better than to turn to Henry Fairlie's book, *The Kennedy Promise: The Politics of Expectation* (New York, Doubleday, $7.95; London, Eyre Methuen, £3.25). It has not had a very good press in this country but it has been much praised in the United States; and it throws more light, I think, on some of the implications of Watergate than anything else which is available at the present time (unless perhaps we return once again to Tocqueville and Lord Bryce—do foreigners sometimes see things about the United States which Americans, who take them for granted, fail to notice?).

Mr Fairlie's thesis, which he expounds with great elegance and persuasiveness, is that President John F. Kennedy introduced into the United States an essentially personal style of government which has been imitated and continued by his successors, whether Democratic or Republican. It was a style which rested on three propositions which, taken together, form a theory of government which is not easy to reconcile with the constitution of the United States as it has been traditionally interpreted.

The first proposition is that the President is authorised, and indeed has the duty, to use all the powers which are not specifically denied him by the Constitution, and indeed, it would appear, some that are, like the power to make war and peace. One does not have to be a "strict constructionist" of the Constitution to believe that so sweeping a claim, even though it has deep roots in the Democratic Party, is at variance if not with the letter at least with the spirit of the Constitution.

The second claim was that, by the fact of his election, the President became the direct and personal representative of the hopes and aspirations of all the people of the United States. This was true even if, as in the case of President Kennedy, he was elected by only a minuscule majority of the popular vote. Presidential election confers a mystical authority comparable to that which was conveyed by the ceremonial oil traditionally poured on the head of a Holy Roman Emperor. The President represents the People in a way which no other element of the constitution does and as such his powers are literally inexhaustible.

But the third claim was even wider and more universal. The President of the United States is not merely the electorally anointed head of the American people; as the leader of the "free world" he also represents all those people throughout the world who are denied the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness which is guaranteed by the American constitution, of which the President is the personal embodiment in every quarter of the globe.

IT WOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT, and Mr Fairlie does not find it difficult, to discover in the speeches of President Kennedy repeated assertions of all three of these claims. They constituted the background against which he exercised his own highly personal style of political leadership, and the fact that he did this with considerable charm and panache should not blind one to their dubious legitimacy. By what right, for instance, did President Kennedy proclaim, at the Berlin Wall, *Ich bin ein Berliner!* I am a Berliner! No one was ever less like a Berliner, he was not a native of Berlin, however high his momentary popularity may have been. In fact, as President of the United States he had elected himself to be the personal representative of the great, sad and divided Prussian city on the Spree and he implicitly claimed the right to do the same in any area of the world where democracy might be thought to be in danger, in particular in Viet Nam.

No more universal claim has been made by any emperor, Roman, Byzantine, or Russian. By comparison, the claims of a British King-Emperor (or Queen-Empress) who in fact, though only through responsible ministers, exercised effective dominion over a quarter of the globe, seem almost absurdly modest. There are passages in some speeches of the last three American Presidents which have reminiscences of old promises of world domination:

Heute gehort uns Deutschland,
Und morgen die ganze Welt.

Sometimes one wonders why President Kennedy did not proclaim Washington the Fourth Rome. Indeed, he came very near to doing so—and a New Athens as well.

A NEW ROME in fact is what Washington has become. The imperial theme has been repeatedly announced, and it was impossible not to notice that President Nixon, in his television address to the American nation, even as he apologised, and assumed responsibility for, the most squalid of political manoeuvres, still had the self-confidence to claim that, as leader of the "free world" and in view of the crushing responsibility he bore in that capacity, he should be excused for his failure to notice what was going on in his own back-yard. Imperial power, however, has sad consequences for those who exercise it, and those on whom it is exercised. Emperors need lackeys and eunuchs, kings need courtiers. The essential quality of such servitors is that they exercise power for no other reason than the grace and favour of their master, represent no one and nothing except the will of the reigning monarch, and have no fount of authority or legitimacy except the man whom they serve.

It is with such men that President Nixon

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surrounded himself, but the striking decline that has taken place in certain qualities of the President's advisers since the days of Mr Kennedy should not conceal the fact that there has been no essential difference in the function they have been asked to perform under any of the last three Presidents, which was to serve the wishes of the President rather than the needs of the nation. In each case, they were drawn from men who had no independent political position, represented no independent political interest, and enjoyed no political authority except through the trust and confidence of the President. Even now, Mr Nixon seems half-inclined to forgive his subordinates, whatever their misdeeds, because, after all, they were primarily motivated by loyalty to him and Mr Nixon equates this with loyalty to the nation. It is a mistake which many monarchs have made about many indispensable favourites, and in Washington the result has been the same as at many other courts: the sacrifice of the favourite when it is necessary to preserve the monarch.

IN HIS EFFORT to explain what he believes to be the profound change which has taken place in the character of the American Presidency in recent years, Henry Fairlie very effectively contrasts the way in which the last three presidents have conducted themselves in office with the demeanour of the most formidable of all modern presidents, Franklin Roosevelt. No one could ever have accused Mr Roosevelt of being a strict constructionist in his view of the constitution of the United States; and, on occasion, he played fast and loose with it and got into serious trouble as a result. Yet, while always believing that the constitution gave the President every power he could require in order to safeguard the wealth, health, and happiness of the United States he also had a very strong sense of the real as well as the formal limitations of the powers of the President. He took care to surround himself with men who, either because of the political interests they represented, or because of their own personal merits and abilities, were able, in serving him, to exercise genuinely independent judgment. As a result he received much conflicting advice, and indeed he seemed positively to enjoy, and to exacerbate, the disagreements which sometimes arose both between individual members of his staff and between his staff and himself. Moreover, he followed the same highly idiosyncratic procedure in his appointments to his cabinet and to the great departments of state. He liked to appoint stubborn and opinionated men who were willing and able to defend established and entrenched positions and were not willing to give them up without good and compelling interests. Consensus was the last thing which he aimed at, whereas consensus, however achieved, has become an almost obsessive interest of more recent presidents.

THE RESULTS OF THE CONTINUOUS process of discussion and debate did not always favour efficiency in government. Sometimes Roosevelt's successive administrations seemed to relapse into a state of open civil war, and there was always something of the atmosphere, not always good-natured, of a bear garden about them. Under Mr Roosevelt, indeed, consensus was as often lacking as not. Yet his methods of government, confused and bewildering as they often were, ensured that Presidential decisions were made in full awareness of all the long-term, as well as the short-term, interests and opinions which were involved; and they were so far successful that, under Mr Roosevelt, the United States survived the two greatest crises, in peace and in war, which it has ever faced. A part at least of this success was due to Mr Roosevelt's gift in choosing colleagues and collaborators who did not find a difficulty in reconciling loyalty to a President with loyalty to the United States as a whole.

Mr Fairlie quotes an exclamation by Louis Howe, than whom no President ever had a more loyal and devoted servant, on receiving a note from the President: "Tell the President to go to Hell." One somehow doubts that anyone ever thought of talking like that to President Kennedy or President Johnson or President Nixon, and one has the feeling that if they did, they would not have lasted for long. One can talk to Presidents like that, but not to monarchs, hedged round as they are by divinity.

There can be no greater contrast than that between the accounts we have of Mr Roosevelt's methods of government, which at times created a positive Bedlam of conflicting judgments, and the image of President Nixon, withdrawn and aloof in the White House, access to him rigidly controlled by his staff, and almost entirely insulated from hostile criticism, even when that is meant to assist him. It is the difference between a president and a king; it is also the difference between a situation in which Watergate would have been an impossibility and one in which it, or something like it, is inevitable.

It may well be that, as one might hope, in the end the results of Watergate will not be wholly for the bad. If they are not, it will be because Watergate will have directed men's minds, not so much to the squalid details of the affair and to the personalities involved, as to the dangers inherent in the immense growth of presidential power in the United States in recent years and, even more perhaps, to the particular form it has assumed and the evils which must necessarily accompany it.

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FILM

Fantasia

By John Weightman

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN nice to applaud Mr Lindsay Anderson's *O Lucky Man!*, since the film is his biggest and most ambitious work to date. A lot of good actors are involved in it, and at times it seems to be trying to say something pertinent about contemporary English life. Moreover, Mr Anderson himself and the cast appear to be very pleased with it; in the last sequence, they all assemble in a large hall for no other reason than to embrace warmly in the best show-biz manner and dance under a barrage of multi-coloured balloons, to the thumping music of Alan Price's orchestra. It is as if they were saying: "Admire the love we bear each other! We have made a splendid film! O lucky, but deserving, we!" But no answering throb came from where I sat. Having remained unconvinced by the film during the three long hours of its screening, I could only feel that such jollity was out of place.

Yet I remember *If* as being in some respects a very good film, and more recently I thought that Mr Anderson's brilliant staging of David Storey's plays, *The Contractor* and *The Changing Room*, at the Royal Court Theatre, left absolutely nothing to be desired. What has gone wrong in *O Lucky Man!* to produce this impression of overblownness, of complacent wrong-headedness? Are we faced with a mild case of Ken-Russellism? Is it a question of too many cooks spoiling the broth—Malcolm McDowell and David Sherwin as script-writers, Alan Price as musician and lyricist, and Lindsay Anderson as moderator-*cum*-director? Or has Mr Anderson magnified the weakest parts of *If*—the imitative references to other directors, such as Vigo—under the mistaken impression that they were the best? Perhaps, in the light of a long interview published in *The Times*, this last explanation is the correct one. It seemed clear to me that the "realistic" parts of *If* were much better than the fantastic. Not that I don't see the point of fantasy; it was rather that I didn't think Mr Anderson particularly good at it, whereas his realism was excellent. Now, he states his conviction that

> "the challenge of the cinema . . . is to go beyond easy naturalism and to get back to the expressiveness and variety and the sense of style there was in the silent cinema, and to use the additional things offered by sound and colour to strengthen that eloquence, rather than just make the whole thing more naturalistic. . . ."

and he quotes Brecht's aphorism: "Realism is not a matter of showing real things, but of showing how things really are." This is a neat restatement of the eternal problem of art, which is to decide on the most effective stylisation for a particular purpose, since it is a philosophical impossibility to be truly realistic. There are times when fantasy gets closer to the truth than literalism—for instance, in that archetypal picaresque work, Voltaire's *Candide*, which immediately comes to mind in connection with *O Lucky Man!*, since McDowell plays the part of a Candide-like semi-innocent questing through England. But if fantasy is allowed to operate more or less at random, as it does in Mr Anderson's film, it just produces coarse and muddled effects, neither *Wahrheit* nor *Dichtung*.

THE FILM OPENS with a sequence imitating an old silent movie. Perhaps because Mick Travis, the hero, is to begin his picaresque career as a coffee-salesman, we are shown South American natives picking coffee-beans under the vigilant eye of an overseer with a whip. One of the natives (McDowell with a moustache) steals a few beans. He is brought before a bloated, snarling judge who condemns him to have his hands chopped off, and the sentence is duly executed in horrid close-up. Why are our sensibilities assaulted in this way from the start? Are we meant to think that we shouldn't consume coffee at all, since it is a product of barbarous colonial oppression? This is the point that Voltaire makes, in connection with sugar, in the course of Candide's travels in America. But in Voltaire's day, slavery and summary mutilation were literally true, although the episode is fantastic. Or are we supposed to be impressed by the irony of the contrast between

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the primitive conditions in which coffee is grown and the psychological emptiness of the streamlined English packing-factory and the elaborate effort that is put into sales-promotion? But for such an effect to work, we would have to be convinced that mutilation is a contemporary practice. Have we any reason to believe it is? I suspect Mr Anderson, in his anti-capitalist mood, is just thinking "Coffee? . . Ah! colonial exploitation!" and putting in an echo of Eisenstein or some other director who produced telling images of oppression. He is not thinking in terms of reality, whether literal or transposed; he is operating in terms of clichés and cinematic reminiscences.

The same criticism could be made of several of the major episodes. Mick Travis is caught with a pair of binoculars outside an atomic research establishment in the North of England. The security officers submit him to electric-shock torture, which is accepted as a matter of course by the tea-lady who comes in with her trolley. Then the plant blows up in an elaborate sequence, and Travis is the only person to escape through the mass of flame and smoke that envelops the moors. This is not remotely representative of anything in England; it can only be an irrelevant reference to one of the James Bond films. Then Travis comes down out of the smoke into a happy valley, where the harvest festival is being prepared in a charming, old-world church. Hitchcock often plays in this way on the sudden contrast between violence and pastoral or family innocence. When Mick is about to steal a loaf to appease his hunger, a full-bosomed lady (whose youngest child seems, however, to be about three years old and well beyond the breast-feeding stage), restrains his hand, says "Why, you are just a boy!" and suckles him like a baby. This struck me as being very Pasolini-like; but is Mr Anderson making fun of Pasolini, or imitating him because he thinks him truly and mysteriously poetic? Impossible to say. Breast-fed Mick then gambols blissfully through the meadows with the older children, as if he were doing a commercial for human milk, the most genuine of nature's foods, better even than Kerrygold butter, or vaguely remembering Trintignant's lyrical bounding along the beach in *Un homme et une femme*. Since his milch-cow earth-mother has uttered the sybilline words: "The North is no place for you" (why, for Heaven's sake?), he hitches a lift south on the motor-way, but ends up in the private clinic of a mad doctor, engaged on gruesome, futuristic surgery, which includes grafting human heads on to animal bodies. This part reminds one of the medical scenes in *A Clockwork Orange* or of certain horror movies, but cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be construed as a comment on the possible excesses of real-life English medicine.

I NEEDN'T continue the catalogue. The point is that, in presenting us with corrupt policemen, power-crazy tycoons, sado-masochistic judges, murderous meths-drinkers or suicidal Cockney housewives, Mr Anderson doesn't seem to be in England at all. No doubt, such characters exist amongst us, but he cannot convince us imaginatively of their existence. He is in the hodge-podge of his own memory, where Fellini, Charlie Chaplin, Buñuel and a dozen other directors seem to be jostling for first place. In other words, he has no firm style of his own into which he is transposing true perceptions. In the interview already quoted, he remarks incidentally:

> "I think the popular tradition of comedy is tremendously strong and tremendously good. The kind of thing you get from *Till Death Do Us Part* and *Dad's Army*, at its best, is really much better than most of what is being given to us by the serious and the experimental theatre. . . ."

and he implies that his film is in the same category. But I don't think it is. Although it has Mona Washbourne from *Till Death Do Us Part* and Arthur Lowe from *Dad's Army*, it is not as good as either of these TV serials, because it hasn't settled for a coherent stylisation, either on the immediately philistine level where they operate, or on any higher level. Another picaresque film running at the moment—*That'll Be The Day*—written by Ray Connolly and with David Essex and Ringo Starr in the main parts, is no great masterpiece, but at least, in its modest naturalism, it is truer to things as they recognisably are, and nearer to the average virtues of a TV serial.

The sad thing is that we could do with successful, ambitious films about English life of the kind that *O Lucky Man!* is clearly intended to be. And it occurs to me, as I reflect again on the qualities of Voltaire's *Candide*, which is the best symbolical application of the picaresque form I know, that the uncertainties of Mr Anderson's film may arise in the last resort from an inadequate treatment of evil.

One of the main problems of the picaresque is what to do with the hero, who is moving from episode to episode. Should he be a *pícaro*, that is, a more or less mild rogue, who comes to a good or bad end, thus exemplifying various kinds of achievement or failure? Should he be put through an *éducation sentimentale*, or should he remain a mere cypher linking the satirical sketches together? Voltaire adopts the most poetic solution by giving Candide an incorruptible purity, which represents the hope for good that springs eternal in every human breast. The character becomes a symbol of the soul voyaging naïvely through the welter of the Absurd world, and the various forms of evil fall into a pattern in relationship to his central innocence. Mr Anderson's hero undergoes

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some curious changes. At first, he is an average go-getter with moments of boyish decency; later, he turns into a more deliberate rogue; but then—just when he is at his most roguish—he is cheated and imprisoned as if he were only a simple-minded fool. He comes out of prison as a determined do-gooder (although Mr Anderson has also been heavily ironical about the non-curative effects of prison) and preaches love and forbearance with disastrous consequences to himself. In the penultimate sequence, he has the good fortune to bump into Mr Anderson in person as *guru*, who slaps him in the face and so, by shock treatment, produces the smile of Zen enlightenment. *Il faut cultiver son sourire* appears to be the appropriate response to the Absurd world. The incoherences of the character are off-putting, but the conclusion would be acceptable if it were properly worked into the fabric of the film as an Absurdist aesthetic. But Mr Anderson hasn't himself achieved any central point from which to view evil with understanding and artistic command. After being somewhere on the New Left, he is now just anarchistic and uninterestingly cynical. Alan Price's lyrics catch the tone exactly:

> If you've found the reason to live and not to die—
> you are a lucky man!
> Preachers and poets and scholars don't know it,
> Temples and statues and steeples won't show it. . . .

Nor do films like this one.

Vermin Trap

I sit. It seems an ordinary chair;
the standard sort of furniture released
to any type of office. And the desk
could well have come from any sort of room

in hospital departments. On the floor
an ordinary carpet coats the boards
that bear no signs of violence, are not flagged
with solid slabs of granite. And the walls

are covered with some nondescript design,
not grooved down like the narrow untrimmed sides
my fantasy expected. Overhead
the clean white of the ceiling is not holed,

nor stretches like some massive coverstone
above some unseen springing. At the door,
the black rocks of the outcrop of the tor
are safe behind those whitewashed corridors

that do not wing towards us. Yet I fear.
Vermin use the passage at their will
until the trap is set, until their rage
tears round with futile teeth against the cage.

John Gurney

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Literature & Criticism

The Touch of a Vanished Hand

On Ricks's Tennyson—By JOHN BAYLEY

"TENNYSON WAS a great child", wrote Wilfred Owen after undergoing a bombardment, "so should I have been but for Beaumont-Hamel." Owen would not have said that, we may suppose, if he had not in fact continued to feel very close to Tennyson. Even in the trenches he was able to draw nourishment from a poet whose inward woes were strangely consonant with the outward horrors which surrounded him. The melodies of Keats and Tennyson may have seemed to lie behind him in an unimaginably more innocent world, but through them he was able to summon the sweetness of the past to reveal the horror of the present. His art could avail itself, unconsciously perhaps, of the power that Tennyson's poetry has to dramatise passive suffering, to convey maimed and solutionless states of being in words that are masterfully poised and immaculately sufficient.

That contrast between style and experience, at work in the best of Owen's poetry under the circumstances that killed him, was Tennyson's supreme resource in circumstances in which he hardly cared to stay alive. Style saved him from himself, as it saved Owen from a too direct and yearning indulgence in the pity and indignation that overwhelmed him. "When Harold Nicolson refers to Tennyson's 'maddening accuracy'," observes Christopher Ricks, "it should be retorted that it may have maddened Nicolson but it helped to keep Tennyson sane."[1]

T. S. Eliot was as intimate as Owen with the voice of Tennyson. The personal unhappiness behind *The Waste Land*, a "rhythmical grumbling" as the poet has called it, had none the less the tone and the rhythm that revealed the post-war epoch to itself. The modern superficies of the poem begin to look more and more in collusion with the Victorian experience. And not only *The Waste Land*: from "Marina" ("What seas, what shores, what grey rocks and what islands"?) to the *Four Quartets* sounds the same haunted yet meticulous tone, the same dying fall, the same cadence of query and repetition which a Victorian ear would have recognised and identified. Such fragments were shored by both poets against their ruins, nor is there any lack of fellow-feeling in Eliot's comment on "In Memoriam":

> "It is not religious because of the quality of its faith, but because of the quality of its doubt. Its faith is a poor thing but its doubt is a very intense experience."

Eliot, it is true, is far more than Tennyson a poet of dual personality. We have more or less abandoned his old critical nostrum of the "unified sensibility", but there is no doubt which of the two is the more unified. Tennyson barely used his mind outside his poetry, or indeed about his poetry: his very considerable intellectual resources are all devoted to displaying how much there is in what Walt Whitman called "the finest verbalism", and how pervasive and potent is the authority it can obtain over the mind. Eliot, on the other hand, gave the impression—with what if any degree of disingenuousness it is hard to say—that poetry was for him not really an intelligential activity at all: his mental and judicial powers went into his criticism, and into the definition of cultural and spiritual attitudes of his time which amounts to a kind of apologia or self-portrait. Poetry freed him from a burden of intellectual self-consciousness which Tennyson could only assume when producing it.

TENNYSON TOUCHED his time like the vanished hand, and this intimate kind of bestowal probably does more than anything to revive a similar familiarity in a latter age. It is not only a question of "what oft was thought": part of the secret of Tennyson's continued intimacy, we may agree, lies in his belonging to that band of geniuses among which D. H. Lawrence—whose approval may surprise us—lists him: those with "a proper proportion between male and female." The wholly masculine talent is apt to belong more

[1] *Tennyson*. By CHRISTOPHER RICKS. Macmillan, £3·95.

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exclusively to its period: it is probably no accident that Pope feels closer to us today than Wordsworth, or Tennyson than Browning. Poets of great and egotistical originality—self-absorbed or world-absorbed explorers, the happily extroverted or the tranquilly introverted—tend to become encapsulated in their epoch, divulging most to the sensibility trained and attuned to their historical and ideological significance. Browning is a genial stranger to most of us today and all the more of a stranger for being so genial. Weep and the world weeps with you; laugh, and you laugh alone. The paradox is singularly true of Browning; and, had it been the kind of remark he was in the habit of making, Tennyson might have observed that Browning's happy upbringing in Camberwell left him in many respects "a great child", and that so might his own, but for Somersby Rectory.

Not the rectory only, of course: there was the *damnosa hereditas* of the Tennyson black blood. With great verve and economy Ricks sketches in the impossible conditions of Tennyson's childhood, with its nightmare of double alienation, dispossessed in a family whose most corroding grievance was the sense of dispossession. It is this nightmare, and the disablement for love it brings, a disablement lapsing into madness, which were transformed into the melodies of "Maud":

> The pity and terror which Tennyson had felt for his father's plight (a persecuted man who had persecution mania, a hypochondriac who had ill health) enter the poem as a commiseration which is aware that it must risk the accusation of self-pity since what is at issue is precisely the independence, the free-standing health, of self:
>
> *What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?*
> *Must I too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die? . . .*
>
> So large and so total was Tennyson's attempt to make his past come to terms with him, that it is not surprising he gave "*Maud*" a special place in his heart.

"To make his past come to terms with him"—Ricks puts the matter felicitously, for it is part of the stasis of Tennyson's situation that things, if they come right at all, must come mysteriously right, without the principal figure appearing to move for himself, more than his own Tithonus or Ulysses. Like the seasons that work their spell upon the passive hero of "In Memoriam" the dire troubles and events that harassed Tennyson were eventually overreached, as it were, by some unexpected staunchness in the very passivity with which he encountered them. In this respect Tennyson was the opposite of Baudelaire, who *needed* everything to go wrong, who needed to identify original sin in his own dark compulsions; and it is significant that although Tennyson thought highly of his own most Baudelairean poem, "A Vision of Sin", it may strike us as one of his few totally unresonant and allegorically ineffective pieces. Gloom, less suicidal than self-extinguishing—

> *To drop head foremost in the jaws*
> *Of vacant darkness and to cease—*

is a dynamic of Tennysonian inspiration, but a sense of sinfulness not at all.

RICKS IS EMINENTLY sane about the male and female ambivalence of "In Memoriam", though he does not quote the story—which I hope is true—of the reviewer who in response to the tenderness of feeling in the anonymous poem opined that it may "have proceeded from the full heart of the widow of some military man". The fact was that after his emotionally deprived childhood and youth—he seems to have had very little feeling for his mother, and his aunt Russell was his sole object of ordinary family affection—Tennyson bestowed upon the liberating and joy-bringing Hallam all the deep love of which his nature was capable. No wonder Hallam figures in the poem as friend, lover, husband and indeed God; those were all the things that Tennyson found in him and longed to find: sex, however, he quite obviously did not, and, as Ricks comments, the sexual imagery of "In Memoriam" could only have been put there by a poet unconscious of what he did or what might be inferred from his words.

Such an unconsciousness is of course settled in Tennyson's peculiar achievement, in the interaction of highly self-conscious verbal meticulousness with reverberations of impersonal meaning that, like the waterfall in "The Lotos-Eaters", "a downward smoke"

> *Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.*

Ricks analyses the characteristic "end that is no end" of so many of the poems, pointing out how Tenyson's revision of the last stanza of "The Lady of Shalott" looks forward to "another destructive love which awaits its catastrophe. When Lancelot says 'God in his mercy lend her grace', he speaks as someone to whom God in his mercy will lend grace". There is no hint in "The Lotos-Eaters" of the heroic hardships to come—we only sense the weight of their presence, as we do the past and future of Ulysses. Such poems make it the very genius of their function to end (as Tennyson's friend Spedding observed of "The Two Voices") "leaving everything unsettled, and nothing concluded." Ricks pinpoints the effect by pointing out how often a poem "sets up a tension between its existing moment and its unmentioned outcome." Tennyson's Mariana will always remain

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in the moated grange where "the blue fly sung in the pane", even though we know that her original in *Measure for Measure* is happily reunited with the lover who had abandoned her. Sometimes the very movement of a cadence subtly undoes its sense, as in the conclusion of "Ulysses"—"To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." "Rippling underneath that final line, striving to utter itself but battened down by will, is another line, almost identical and yet utterly different: 'To strive, to seek to yield, and not to find'." Ricks here completes the point suggested by Matthew Arnold, who quoted (and misquoted) three haunting lines with the comment: "It is no blame to their rhythm, which belongs to another order of movement than Homer's, but . . . these take nearly as much time as a whole book of the Iliad." Their slowness suggests that it is indeed far too late to seek a newer world.

Ricks has enshrined Tennyson's own world: this brilliant critical biography sets the seal on the scholarship of his annotated edition.[2] It may be that he does not altogether avoid the temptation, indulged in by several critics since Cleanth Brooks, to be acute at Tennyson's expense—or rather, not so much at his expense, in Ricks' case, as with his lethargic acquiescence: there are moments when we have the impression of an elderly patient being tapped and stretched for the benefit of the students by an omniscient consultant. The gap between the Tennysonian effect and the Ricks diagnosis of it is, and perhaps is bound to be, a wide one; and, penetrating as it is, we may feel this about his summing-up of the critical position on what Brooks called "the motivation of Tennyson's weeper" in "Tears, idle Tears." Tennyson's own comments, he tells us, "are unusually important":

> . . . It was not real woe, as some people might suppose; it was rather the yearning that young people occasionally experience for that which seems to have passed away from them for ever . . . in a way like St Paul's "groanings which cannot be uttered.". . . What I have always felt even from a boy, and what as a boy I called "the passion of the past."

The poem was written at Tintern Abbey, and F. W. Bateson observed that it manifested a deep fissure, for "*either* the days that are no more are the objective past of kings and monasteries, *or* they are the subjective past of the poet's and reader's own earlier life. They cannot be both together." But Ricks suggests that it is precisely both that the poem *does* seek to encompass, "to find a congruence between the public past and a private past." Something of the sort was clearly

[2] *The Poems of Tennyson* (Annotated English Poets, Longman, 1969).

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"unusually important" for Tennyson; and it is significant that Ricks gets closest to what it was by quoting three lines from T. S. Eliot.

Investing form with lucid stillness
Turning shadow into transient beauty
With slow rotation suggesting impermanence.

The same would be true of Tennyson's choice for "In Memoriam" of a stanza which can "circle moaning in the air", returning to its setting-out. His contemporary, R. H. Hutton, said that the air of "moving through a resisting medium" was characteristic of Tennyson's style, and Henry James saw it as "poised and stationary, the phrase seeming to pause and slowly pivot on itself."

As a connoisseur of these effects, and a technician in the art of their appreciation, Ricks is as outstanding as he was on Milton's verse; Tennysonian syntax being frequently supple in the very rigidity of its artifice, as Milton's is. Thus Ricks points out what he calls the "crystallised contrariety" in Tennyson's negatives—"you cannot say 'Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font' without glimpsing, through the interstices of the negative, the winking fin." And he points out what few of us notice (though Tennyson himself said that he had first written the more obvious "strand"), the inspired laziness of the "no rhyme" of *land* with *land* in *The Lotos-Eaters*:

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon".
In the afternoon, they came unto a land
In which it seemèd always afternoon.

In a particularly brilliant analysis of the line "Now lies the earth all Danae to the stars", from "Maud", Ricks points out that at the back of its tender opulence is an effective paradox: "by presenting the golden shower as starlight (emanating not from lecherous Jupiter but from the chaste stars), Tennyson succeeds in the hardest task of all: distinguishing love from lust in erotic poetry." Put like that it may sound a trifle glib, but something of the kind is certainly present in the depths of that exquisite lyric.

SHEER VIRTUOSITY of expression never deserted Tennyson, even when lines do not droop and billow with such a fullness of implication as this. Ricks has culled some excellent things from the *Idylls* (*Charades from the Middle Ages*, as Hopkins wanted to retitle them) which show not so much, as Bagehot put it, that "the sentiments in these poems are simpler than his sentiments used to be" but a virtuosity that remains, as it were, frozen to the spot, instead of wandering off back-

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wards or sideways into meaning. There is Gladstone's favourite for "fine taste" in a most unexpected area:

He spoke: the brawny spearman let his cheek
Bulge with the unswallowed piece, and turning stared.

Even the Tennysonian nightmare of life in death, which should haunt Merlin's betrayal as it haunted the story of Mariana, is extruded in too perfect a visual image.

So dark a forethought rolled about his brain,
As on a dull day in an ocean cave
The blind wave feeling round his long sea-hall
In silence:

Marvellous; but, as Eliot emphasised, Tennyson has no gift for narration in the ordinary sense. The situations of the great poems are static, moving only "with such a tide as moving seems asleep"; and, in the less great, a single line will sometimes arrest all the poem's would-be progress into a heavy drop of meaning which seems to hang suspended. Thus, in "Enoch Arden",

The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down

which will remind us of a culminating line in another motionless poem—Keats's *Hyperion*: "And where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest." Ruskin has the last word on this, saying that he would have sacrificed "nearly all his books to have written one of Tennyson's lines—the last line of 'Will' ":

Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

Word-World

An Audacious Encyclopaedia—By MARTIN DODSWORTH

MARTIN SEYMOUR-SMITH's epigraph from Zamyatin rests boldly on the title-page of his *Guide to Modern World Literature*,[1] a half-truth given the weight of truth itself: "Real literature can be created only by madmen, hermits, heretics, dreamers, rebels and sceptics, not by diligent and trustworthy functionaries." The statement is based on a false distinction, since a trustworthy functionary may well also be a sceptic or a dreamer, and he may be trustworthy just because he has sceptical, visionary or heretical qualities too. Zamyatin's words are valuable, however, because they express a persistent modern feeling that artists should be alienated from the society for which they write. Alienation is a burden which we joyfully impose upon the artist, and which he gratefully accepts:

Come, drunks and drug-takers: come, perverts
unnerved!
Receive the laurel, given, though late, on merit; to
whom and wherever deserved.

Parochial punks, trimmers, nice people, joiners
true-blue,
Get the hell out of the way of the laurel. It is
deathless
And it isn't for you.

We are used to thinking of the artist's separation from society as something historically conditioned, taking Baudelaire's as the representative case: but Louise Bogan's poem offers us that separation as a fact of nature. The laurel is God-given and it is not given to those who are simply "nice people." The fact that they are, instead, "drunks and drug-takers" is what gives her poem its modern, post-Baudelairean cast, but it doesn't alter our sense that the distinction between poets and others ought to be somehow universally valid. And surely we are drawn to agree. We want poets, authors, artists of all kinds to be different, because that is our expectation of their work—that it should present us with new worlds and new experiences, whose novelty is not justified simply and in itself, but as it tells us, in its difference from our world and us, something new or merely unobserved about ourselves. Literature thrives by virtue of its difference from our daily observation of the world; and it is this difference that we would project upon the artist, whether he likes it or not. (One wonders if Wallace Stevens would have been more kindly treated by Mr Seymour-Smith had he been a less diligent and trustworthy functionary in the cause of the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company.)

The writer has done his best, in the last century, to impose upon the pattern of his life the difference of his art itself from life. Mr Seymour-Smith's vast and accomplished book is full of madmen, heretics, dreamers and other persons difficult to accommodate to the business of a modern state. There are functionaries too, and by no means all are of the Wallace Stevens stamp. What of Fan S. Noli, Archbishop and founder of

[1] *Guide to Modern World Literature*. By MARTIN SEYMOUR-SMITH. Wolfe Publishing, £10.

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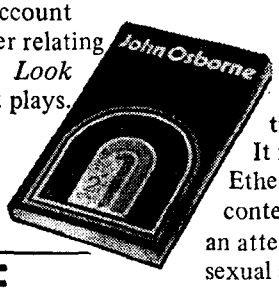

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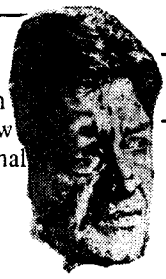

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the Albanian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (proclaimed in Boston in 1908)? We cannot say whether, during his six months of office as Prime Minister, he was any the less diligent for also translating Shakespeare, Ibsen, Cervantes and others into Albanian, thereby infusing "new and essential blood" into its literature. Nor can we say that his career was that of a typical modern writer (he is, we are told, a talented composer of music and his book on Beethoven was admired by Shaw). But Noli certainly fulfils the implicit claim of Mr Seymour-Smith's epigraph that his book contains marvels.

Indeed, it is a very good book, and of a necessary kind. The epigraph says something about its author, as well as about its contents. He is not content to produce the work of diligent and trustworthy functionaries. Every page of this very long, encyclopaedic account of modern world literature, which attempts to cover all writers of interest of whatever nationality who survived 31 December 1899, and which not unreasonably includes a few who died before that date for good measure, was written by Martin Seymour-Smith, aided considerably, no doubt, by the two or three hundred reference works cited in his bibliography. The very audacity of such an attempt, in an age when many writers and scholars take refuge in very limited specialisation indeed, must have been attractive. Zest for the task is evident everywhere in the firm judgments and crisp style. And, of course, the material itself has much to recommend it; a writer is not often given the chance to start a paragraph as follows: "JACK LONDON (1876–1916), bastard son of a wandering Irish astrologer whom he never saw, is wrongly regarded in Russia as a great writer." There can be few works of reference at once as entertaining and informative as this.

There are advantages for the reader too, in having one author responsible for this large undertaking. To begin with, it means that there is no need for entries to be arranged alphabetically. The book is arranged in sections, each dealing with a national literature—African and Caribbean, Albanian, American, Arabic, and so on. Within each section the reader is offered a history of the literature concerned, roughly from the last twenty years of the 19th century to the present day, generally dealing with the novel, drama and poetry in separate sub-sections, and on occasion introducing further chronological divisions. This means, for example, that Virginia Woolf is dealt with after D. H. Lawrence and immediately preceding Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce, at the head of the second novel section of "British Literature"—the first deals with people like Gissing, Wells and Bennett. Virginia Woolf is seen in her context as she would not were she to appear between Wolkers, Jan Hendrik and Wright, David, as would have been the case if this book were the usual sort of compilation by "experts." Mr Seymour-Smith writes well enough to encourage one to read around each entry, something which a host of *q.v.*s are generally hard put to do. One is not ungrateful to find on the page opposite Virginia Woolf the *mot* on Dorothy Richardson's sexual experience: "she was married, and in any case H. G. Wells would have educated her in any shortcomings—if that term may be used advisedly." Reading Martin Seymour-Smith at a stretch one is also able to make allowances for the idiosyncrasies of his judgment in a way that is impossible in less personal compilations.

ONE MUST FACE (I believe that one can) the large objection to all books of this kind, that they cannot give us any information of much value at all. Dorothy Richardson's sexual experience, the career of Fan S. Noli—what we can know of these tells us little about what they wrote. Dictionaries of literature are by and large the repositories of a higher form of gossip, of small relevance and sometimes of none at all to the understanding of poetry, drama or the novel. Martin Seymour-Smith, it is true, does not offer us only information of this kind. He readily passes judgment on the work of his authors. But what weight can we place on his remarks? When he tells us that Vitezslav Nezval was "a truly gifted poet" are we to understand that his judgment is based on more or less than the selection in English to which he refers us? On what authority does he describe Nezval's epic *The Amazing Magician* as "remarkable", and, indeed, what, in this context, does that word mean? Pursuing this line of argument, it would not be difficult for a hostile critic to demonstrate, at little cost, his moral superiority to Martin Seymour-Smith. He might add a sprinkling of errors, inconsistencies, omissions and doubtful judgments noted, too, if he wished: at least two of Babel's plays *have* been translated into English, and performed, too—and the masterly film-scenario *Benya Krik*, which was translated in the 'thirties ought to have been mentioned in the Babel entry; if Noli's book on Beethoven was to be mentioned, then it should have been noted also that an English translation was published; if Kenneth Fearing's *The Big Clock* is included in the American literature section, then Horace McCoy's *They Shoot Horses Don't They?* ought to be there too; two culpable omissions are David Jones from the British section, over-rated though he is, and, more seriously though less noticeably, Janet Lewis from the American section—her book *The Wife of Martin Guerre* ought to be far

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better known. I suspect that Mr Seymour-Smith judges best when not too close to the literature he is judging.

The book rises above such criticisms. Of course there are inaccuracies, but they are not significant in the whole. The usefulness of the information extends beyond gossip; Noli's career certainly tells us something about Albania, and its literature. Furthermore, in its record of the strange lives of artists the book perpetuates the myth of the artist's otherness from the reader, and presents literature in the context of this marvellously alien quality—a quality which, as I have suggested, is intimately related to the otherness of literature itself. The value of this *Guide to Modern World Literature* lies not so much in the function of providing dates of birth and death, dates of publication and all the rest of it, though it performs this function with efficiency, as in the mythical quality that its narrative structure casts over the bare facts it conveys. Saintsbury's *Concise History of English Literature* is not a book to which one returns for its judgments, robust though many of them are, but for many readers, as in my case, it extended the lure of the strange, variegated, never altogether explicable phenomenon of literature. *Guide to Modern World Literature* serves a similar purpose—and it is a necessary one. It is testimony and stimulus to the curiosity on which literature thrives.

FURTHERMORE it is packed with pungent comment and bold judgment. The point here is not whether or not one agrees; the question of authority is of secondary importance. What matters is that Mr Seymour-Smith's commentary exemplifies at almost every point (I will not say he *never* flags) an active engagement with the works he is discussing. He does not lie down before every author in abject admiration. He remarks, for example, of Mishima, that "at one time he showed some sign of outliving his sheer cleverness, but this promise was not maintained." "Nabokov might have been a major writer. . . ." "Curiously, since he is famed for his cerebral qualities, the keynote of the poetry of William Empson is repressed passion." By virtue of this independent posture the *Guide* instructs us not simply who wrote what when, but *how to read* the literature that is its subject. It would be in the spirit of the book itself were we led to disagree with it at any point. We remain unsure, of course, of the basis of Mr Seymour-Smith's knowledge of, for example, Georgian literature: is his omission of Titian Tabidze, a poet whom both Pasternak and Zabolotsky troubled to translate, deliberate or not? Doubtless there is a rhetorical quality to some of the valuations offered. The

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book does not stand or fall on the issue of individual judgments.

When we move from reading about literature to reading literature we suffer a certain shock. Literature is different from the everyday in a way that no critic can adequately express, since its difference lies in its concreteness. It is not all myth. Within literature itself we encounter a fruitful struggle between abstraction and actuality, between a tendency for the work to assimilate itself to the rest of literature and an opposite tendency for it to become absorbed into and identified with its own particular human occasion. Mr Seymour-Smith's book embodies both the myths of literature and a sense of what it is like to encounter the thing itself. That is the merit—indeed, the distinction—of his excellent book.

Beyond Literature

Social Criticism versus Aesthetics—By LAURENCE LERNER

NEITHER WRITERS nor their readers live in a world of pure aesthetic experience. In the real world we all inhabit, personal relationships lead to moral decisions, and the individual life depends on the life of society. Reflection on that world has led men to moral philosophy, to politics, to theories of history and sociology. Since that is the world to which the poets and novelists give expression, what happens when the critic reflects on poems and novels? He can study them in a strictly literary way, confining himself to the quality of aesthetic experience they offer: by doing this he will be dealing with literature as literature, and no one can accuse him of reducing it to anything else; those who reject his approach will accuse him of formalism. Or he can work his way *through* literature to moral philosophy or social theory, trying to show what view of man, what theory of ethics, what class attitude or what assumptions about history are implied by this or that novel: if he does this no one can accuse him of being trivial or of detaching literature from life, but he may be accused of reducing it, of turning (in the words of that great formalist Paul Valéry) *en moyens d'éducation des instruments de plaisir spirituel.*

This is one of the great debates of literary criticism, and I will come clean immediately and say that I belong to the second camp: I believe criticism should move through literature and try to understand the underlying views of man and society, but should do it by interpreting, not by ignoring, the form of the works. So it is with particular interest that I sit down to examine two distinguished books that in very different ways do just that, to ask what they tell us, to contrast their conclusions, and to ask if they do nonetheless in some way reduce literature.

Both books are by academics: but only one is really an academic book. Mark Roberts has all the professorial virtues, and a few of the professorial limitations.[1] His style is a little ponderous, a little repetitive, but very clear; his argument is developed chronologically, and with subtlety, but the central point can be stated very simply. The traditional pre-Romantic morality was Stoic: the moral life is a life according to Nature (if you look at the outside world) or according to Reason (if you look within); the passions must be held in check; inevitable suffering must be born with patience; and the resulting life, free from perturbations, will be the happiest within man's power. In contrast, Romantic morality emphasises energy of the soul and self-fulfilment, rejecting pre-existing models and refusing to accept the traditional limitations on man's aspirations: "everything possible to be believed is an image of truth."

As an example of Stoic morality we are given Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*, which Mr Roberts considers thoroughly characteristic of its age; for though there is a good deal of apparent anti-Stoicism in the 18th century, this is merely because the extreme of Stoic virtue was regarded as unattainable for ordinary humans. Traditional morality is essentially Stoic, and continues into Wordsworth, whose moral ideas and system of thought belong completely to the 18th century. The central figure in English Romanticism, for Mr Roberts, is Blake, not only the first but also the most honest and clear-sighted prophet of the new morality, for he carries to frightening lengths the rejection of reason and the celebration of energy. The contrast established, we follow its fortunes through a scrupulous examination of individual works—scrupulous but not pedantic, for the issue is urgently alive today: the book starts from a production of *Look Back in Anger*, and the striking contrasts in the audience's responses to Jimmy Porter; and it ends with a discussion of BAMN, a collection of "Outlaw Manifestos and Ephemera," in which the rejection of reason and authority is carried

[1] *The Tradition of Romantic Morality*. By MARK ROBERTS. Macmillan, £5.95

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to lengths that would have staggered even Blake. As Mr Roberts calmly remarks, "We are still living in an essentially Romantic age."

Like a good professor, Mr Roberts keeps his cool. As he moves with clinical and learned authority through the mindless rubbish of the manifestos, measuring them against Kantian ideas, the contrast in styles makes a far more fundamental point than anything he actually says; and if any of the outlaws read his book (which is unlikely) they will obviously be goaded to fury. Though he tries to stay objective, there seems little doubt where his sympathies lie: if *that* is where Romantic morality has got us, it's time the pendulum swung. Indeed, his view of Romanticism is an outsider's view in a way that leads it to be one-sided: Blake is certainly the central figure of the tradition that culminates in Lawrence and in BAMN, but Wordsworth is the central figure of another tradition that Mr Roberts dismisses too easily (Shelley, say, George Eliot, Tolstoy), one for which intuitionalism does not lead to isolation and hostility, rather to outgoing and generous impulses.

BUT MY MAIN WISH is not to engage in debate with this book on its own terms: it is to consider its method of handling literature. Now in a sense, Mr Roberts disarms us by getting in first: he admits several times that he is discussing the history of ideas, rather than poetry, and that to make his points he has had to "abstract" certain moral patterns, and relate them to philosophic traditions. But in that case, why write about literature in the first place? The argument of the book seems most at home when it deals with Kant or Schopenhauer or Nietzsche, on whom no surgery is necessary. And why, above all, write about a novelist and then choose his essays, especially when they are such murky essays as Lawrence's *Fantasia of the Unconscious*? The chapter on Lawrence shows all the faults of this method. It says nothing about consequences of these ideas for Lawrence's fiction; but on the other hand it is hard to take the discussion seriously as psychology. We are told that the work is much indebted to Freud (which I doubt), and a discussion of Freud's theory of the unconscious, and its ambivalent relation to the doctrine of energy of the soul, would have been far more worthwhile than the ludicrous anatomy of solar plexus, lumbar ganglion, and other centres of pre-mental consciousness, of which Mr Roberts says, in the understatement of the year, "Lawrence is not always circumspect in his use of terms."

No doubt Mr Roberts could give a number of good reasons for writing his book about literature. It is in literature that we really *see* these moral issues enacted; though I can think of no clear evidence for his astonishing (and unsupported) assertion that the change he is studying was *brought about* by literature. And then too he is an excellent literary critic: his chapter on *Wuthering Heights*, for instance, is extremely perceptive, and the comparison between Heathcliff and Jimmy Porter is brilliant. But how much he has to ignore in order to abstract his moral points! And even ignoring we could forgive; but sometimes he distorts. His Wordsworth is lop-sided, and leaves out all the best poetry; but his Browning is worse—mangled by his insistence on asking whether Bishop Blougram represents Browning's own teaching, by quoting indiscriminately from his dramatic characters the remarks that he feels the author agrees with. A discussion of Browning which ignores the dramatic nature of his poetry must distort the effect of every line, for it is an attempt to undo that act of identification on which all the effects are based. At moments like this we realise that what we are seeing is a good critic spoilt by his purpose.

RAYMOND WILLIAMS is a very different case.[2] He is as learned as Mark Roberts, but does not show the same concern for his reader: he neither chooses a few sustained examples nor writes with such clarity, and shows none of the pedagogic skills of Mr Roberts. What he does show is an urgent personal involvement: no academic detachment here, but a determination to write from his own experience. When he was a child he helped his father learn Herrick's poem "A Thanksgiving":

> *Lord, Thou hast given me a cell*
> *Wherein to dwell,*
> *A little house, whose humble Roof*
> *Is weather-proof . . .*

As it happens, I first read this poem, as a child, under a roof and a porch probably lower than Herrick's, and I could then neither get the lines out of my mind nor feel other than angry about them.

I wish I had space to quote the page that follows, a marvellous example of critical insight sharpened by personal acerbity. And it is central to what the book is about: the literature of city and country measured against the reality of urban and rural life.

To understand the method, we can start from the remarks on pastoral poetry in an early chapter:

> All traditions are selective: the pastoral tradition quite as much as any other. Where poets run scholars follow, and questions about the "pastoral"

[2] *The Country and the City*. By RAYMOND WILLIAMS. Chatto & Windus, £3.

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poetry or the poetry of "rural retreat" of our own sixteenth to eighteenth centuries are again and again turned aside by the confident glossing and glozing of the reference back. We must not look with Crabbe and others, at what the country was really like: that is a utilitarian or materialist, perhaps even a peasant response. Let us remember, instead, that this poem is based on Horace, Epode II or Virgil, Eclogue IV; that among the high far names are Theocritus and Hesiod: the Golden Age in another sense.

It is time that this bluff was called.

Whose bluff is Mr Williams calling, the poets' or the scholars'? Sometimes it is the scholars, when he insists on interpreting a book in terms of contemporary life, not of literary tradition. As is to be expected, this produces some brilliant and one-sided insights, as when he finds in Dickens' method of characterisation ("men and women, each heard in some fixed phrase, seen in some fixed expression") "a way of seeing men and women that belongs to the street", without mentioning Ben Jonson and humour-tradition, to which Dickens owes so much.

But mostly, though, the paragraph seems to say the opposite: it is the poets' bluff that is being called. Mr Williams has too much sense to deny that pastoral poems *were* based on Horace, Epode II, or Virgil, Eclogue IV, but he wishes they weren't, and he prefers those poets who put down their Virgil and looked at the country scene around them, above all those who looked at the social basis of the scene. So he has little to say on the pastoral tradition proper, but a good deal on the country-house poems, and he says it in the form of a rebuke to those nostalgic critics who admire the portrayal, in Jonson's Penhurst or Carew's Saxham, of a natural order we have now lost. We are made to look at what goes on in the poem, and what no doubt went on in reality, and to see that the comparison between the great house and Paradise, the magical effect of an estate that offers its produce spontaneously as if in the Golden Age, is achieved by pretending there are no labourers. "To call this a natural order is an abuse of language."

I doubt if it is possible, after reading this discussion, ever again to see the country-house poems in the same way; but most of Mr Williams' book offers a less immediate harvest than that. What he shows us is not so much a new way of reading English literature but (the distinction is hard to draw, but real and important) a new way of perceiving its relation to English society. Thus, to take a crude example, when he finds an "irony" in Marvell it is not a verbal tension in the poem but the fact that the future marriage of Fairfax's daughter, celebrated in "Appleton House", "was to be the appalling George Villiers"; or when he discusses the theme of rural decay in 18th-century poetry, he knows enough about the

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Enclosure movement to point out that the destruction of old social relations which they lament is actually the effect of agricultural improvement, not decay.

MR WILLIAMS, in short, moves through literature to social reality; and his view of English social history is therefore central to the understanding of his book. It is, as we expect from Mr Williams, a radical view, concrete and particular (he learnt by his upbringing to see English society from below), and at the same time influenced by Marxism (not ideas but classes bring about change). The view has great strengths, and some weaknesses. It leads to a shrewd and compassionate understanding of rural property relations, of the game laws as seen by the "poachers" (*i.e.*, the rural population), of the drive to enshrine the existing social structure as something it was absurd, or blasphemous, to question ("the armed gangs became social and natural orders, blessed by their gods and their churches"). But it also leads to the belief that no honest and intelligent conservatism is possible (he cannot understand how readers of Hardy "should still feel sufficiently identified" with the world that rejected Jude to call its critics bitter); and it leads to a curious lack of interest in questions of individual psychology. George Eliot's concentration on the growth and crises of the individual in a social order that is not much questioned is seen as a kind of decline from a true social vision; and Jung's theory of archetypes is presented as a kind of by-product of the development of urban consciousness.

But I once more don't wish simply to take this book on its own terms, but to ask why, if it is so deeply concerned with English society, it is about literature. As Mr Roberts was (in a way) most at home discussing Schopenhauer, is Mr Williams most at home discussing the growth of agrarian capitalism and of urbanisation, and the intricacies of class exploitation (all of which he does frequently and well)? And in a way my answer is yes. There is some excellent literary criticism in this book (it has the best discussion of Crabbe I've ever seen), but I could make a long list of the writers on whom Mr Williams has disappointingly little to say because their deepest interests are somehow remote from his (not only George Eliot, but, alas, Dickens too, from whom he quotes long descriptive passages with brief and fairly obvious comments). Furthermore, there is a limitation in his whole conception of literature which grows clearer the more we read. Praising the autobiography of a modern farm labourer, Fred Kitchen's *Brother to the Ox*, he writes: "What is impressive is not only the absence of

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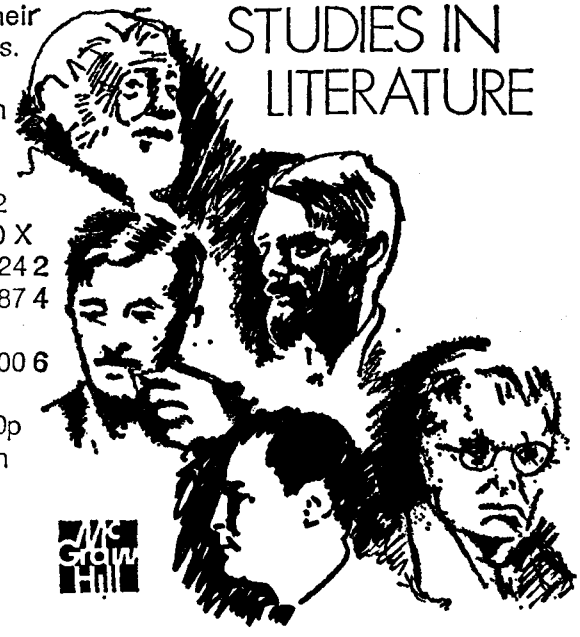

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the myths, the allusions and the false history." Myths? Does he *mean* myths? Well, perhaps the sentence is just carelessly written, and "myths" is being used in its colloquial sense of falsehoods. But I can't quite believe that: Mr Williams seems to me so deeply committed to a criterion of realism that though he can offer some good theoretical remarks on myth, he would be uncomfortable with a work of literature too deeply impregnated with it. And one doesn't need to be a Jungian to think that leaves out rather a lot.

I feel a deep respect for both these books: to move beyond literature is to take literature seriously, to accept that it is really *about* something. Both authors are sensitive readers, both are highly intelligent, both are committed (one, explicitly, to a radical position, the other, surely, implicitly, to a conservative one). Neither wants to reduce literature to documentation yet, over and over, both do. They make me long for the critic whose concern is aggressively aesthetic—for Eliot or Yeats or Valéry, the critics whose party I know I am not of. To move through literature and keep one's literary awareness undamaged: that is the hardest task of all.

Life's Divisions

The Continuing Debate on Aldous Huxley—By BERNARD BERGONZI

ALDOUS HUXLEY had not one but several reputations, ranging from the witty iconoclast of the 'twenties to the expatriate guru of the Californian desert, and when he died ten years ago it didn't look as if any of them would survive for long. His last novel, *Island*, had been found generally feeble as fiction and unconvincing as utopian speculation. Individual books as various as *Antic Hay* or *Brave New World* or *The Perennial Philosophy* might retain their admirers, and even acquire new ones, but as a whole the Huxley *oeuvre* looked increasingly dated and irrelevant. In fact, the decline to a mere footnote in literary history hasn't happened. Our present campy interest in the 'twenties has given the vintage Huxley novels a fresh appeal, evident in their adaptation for television. There is a gloomy fascination in seeing the ingenious horrors of *Brave New World* realised, not hundreds of years into the future, as Huxley conservatively supposed, but here and now, before our very eyes. Indeed, some bold speculators find positive prescriptions in the book, such as Shulamith Firestone, who regards extra-uterine conception and breeding as the Final Solution of the Woman Problem. And the interests of Huxley's later years, in mind-expanding drugs or questions of ecology and over-population, anticipated by ten or fifteen years some central preoccupations of the 'sixties and 'seventies.

Quite a number of recent books indicate the continuing interest in Huxley. There has been Ronald Clark's collective biography of the Huxley family, and the second Mrs Huxley's rather embarrassing memoir of her husband, followed by Grover Smith's massive edition of the letters, copious but mostly dull. One has even had such a barrel-scraping curiosity as a collected edition of Huxley's poetry, which was quite exceptionally minor. And there has been a steady succession of studies of Huxley, critical, biographical, expository, four of which have appeared in a little over a year. In their biographical aspects these books rely on much the same sources—the letters, and the memoirs by Mrs Huxley, and Julian Huxley—containing similar material, and similar exclusions and silences. Professor Thody[1] makes free use of Huxley's novels for the supposed light they shed on his life, but they raise more questions than they answer. There is, for instance, the horrible account in *Point Counter Point* of the death of Little Phil from meningitis, which D. H. Lawrence implied was the cause of estrangement between Huxley and his first wife, Maria: "I think the *Counter-Point* book sort of got between them—she found it hard to forgive the death of the child—which one can well understand." No doubt we shall have to wait for a properly documented biography to discover the circumstances Lawrence was alluding to. Yet a quasi-biographical approach to Huxley is clearly right: if he remains interesting it is as a man rather than an artist; an attractive if enigmatic personality who lived through and expressed some of the representative crises of a 20th-century intellectual; a highly productive man of letters who wrote many books that are loosely classified as "fiction" but who once frankly acknowledged, "I am not a born novelist, but some

[1] *Aldous Huxley: A Biographical Introduction.* By PHILIP THODY. Studio Vista, £2.25, paper 95p.

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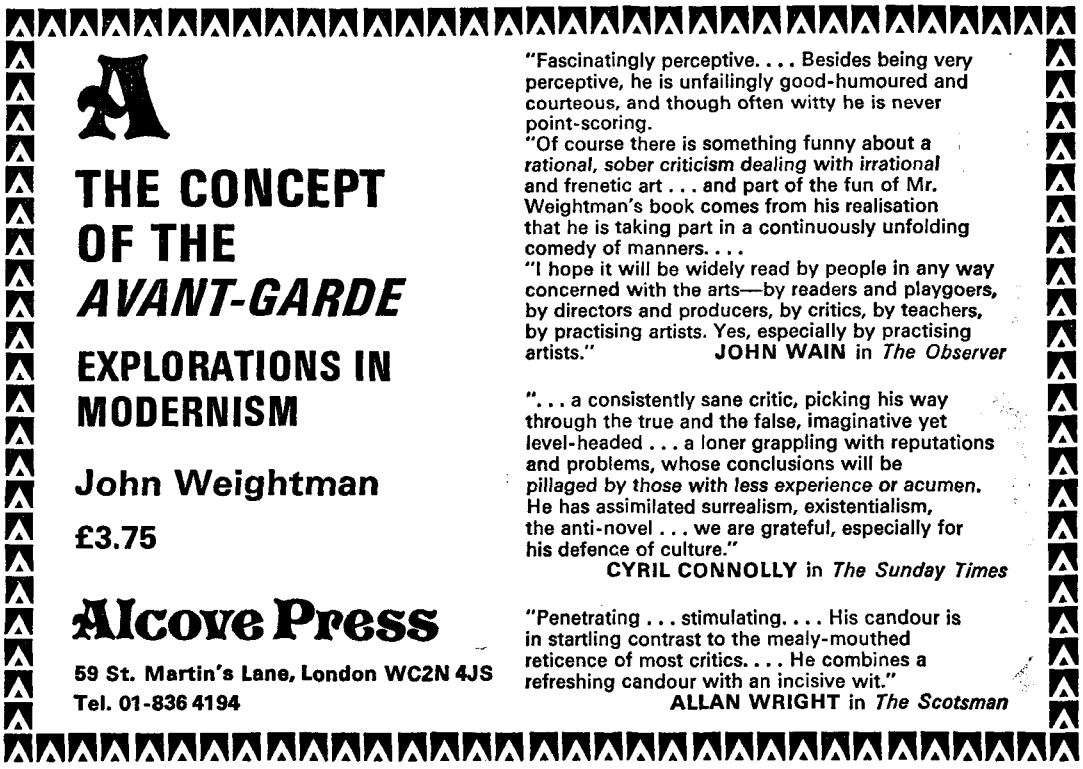
other kind of man of letters, possessing enough ingenuity to be able to simulate a novelist's behaviour not too unconvincingly."

Messrs Thody, Woodcock and Firchow are interested in the total map of Huxley's literary personality, and try to relate the life, the ideas and the writings, whether fictional or discursive. Only Mr May[2]—whose book is part of a series called "Novelists and Their World"—tries to keep Huxley confined within the literary category of the "pure" novel. Or, more precisely, of that slightly impure and idea-laden kind of fiction that Northrop Frye categorised as the "Menippean satire." Mr May's approach is assiduous; he devotes a separate chapter to each of Huxley's novels, from *Chrome Yellow* to *Island*. His close analysis, verbal, structural, and thematic, is pedestrian rather than illuminating, and only goes to show that most of Huxley's fiction doesn't really respond to orthodox modes of critical exegesis, which were evolved to deal with more aesthetically self-contained literary works. And Mr May, who combines the methods of a close critic with the attitudes of a PR man, seems incapable of passing an adverse judgment on anything that Huxley wrote. He is not, in consequence, a very helpful guide.

OF THE OTHER BOOKS, Mr Woodcock's is certainly the best.[3] He admires Huxley but acknowledges his limitations, and his account is balanced and plausible. His critical discussion is more perceptive than Mr May's. He shows how the same basic characters and structural patterns recur throughout Huxley's novels; for instance, the opposition of dark and light, perhaps having a physical origin in Huxley's near-blindness, had a continuous symbolic significance for him. Mr Woodcock is better informed about some things than the seemingly omniscient Huxley, and quietly puts him right about peasant life in Mexico or the history of Hindu mysticism. If I don't accept all of Mr Woodcock's literary judgments, I can recommend his book for its common sense and humanity, and the very adequate picture it conveys of its subject. Mr Thody's book is slighter. It is vigorously written, and it isn't at all a bad short introduction to Huxley, despite its odd mixture of plot summary, biographical information and random expressions of opinion by the author. The oddest thing of all is that the book comes in a series entitled "Leaders of Modern Thought", a way of describing Huxley which Mr

[2] *Aldous Huxley*. By KEITH M. MAY. Elek, £3.80, paper £1.80.

[3] *Dawn and the Darkest Hour: A Study of Aldous Huxley*. By GEORGE WOODCOCK. Faber, £3.50.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"Penetrating . . . stimulating. . . . His candour is in startling contrast to the mealy-mouthed reticence of most critics. . . . He combines a refreshing candour with an incisive wit." ALLAN WRIGHT in The Scotsman

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Thody himself seems unable to take very seriously, and rightly. Huxley was given to entertaining ideas, usually at second hand, but he didn't much go in for original and sustained thinking. The other "leaders" in this series include Nietzsche, Sartre, Freud and Kierkegaard; Huxley is out of his depth in such company.

Mr Firchow's book[4] is an American contribution, which discusses Huxley's *oeuvre* in a sensibly selective way, and is well documented, particularly about the fugitive writings of Huxley's early literary career, which contained the thematic seeds of his later development. Mr Firchow's style is crisp and free from jargon, though it also manifests a rather insecure, up-tempo brightness, that I have noticed elsewhere in American criticism of modern British literature. He sometimes lacks perspective; thus, he goes on at length about Huxley's satirical technique of counterpointing low and elevated strands of conversation, without acknowledging the source of this literary device in the agricultural-show episode in *Madame Bovary*. He devotes too much space to footling exegesis of the meanings of proper names, and he believes that the Lake District, the scene of Brian Foxe's suicide in *Eyeless in Gaza*, is in Scotland, "the seat of British Puritanism."

ALL OF THESE commentators acknowledge, at least in passing, that Huxley was something of a dualist, oscillating throughout his career between a pagan belief in life and the body, and a mystical Manichean mistrust of carnal existence: he memorably stated this duality in *Point Counter Point*, in the contrast between the over-cerebral writer Quarles and the Lawrentian figure of Rampion. In fact, the essence of Huxley's view of life lay in discontinuity. A wry perception of the gaps between levels of experience underlay the wit in his early novels; as in *Antic Hay*, when the hero reflects, after a sublime performance of Mozart's G Minor Quintet, on the banal personalities of the performers: " 'Strange,' said Gumbril, 'to think that those ridiculous creatures could have produced what we've just been hearing'." Patterns of opposition run throughout Huxley's work: pain and pleasure; thought and action; art and science; mind and body. And particularly the latter; movingly apparent, for instance, in his long late essay on Maine de Biran. Such a belief is not fashionable these days, when platonic or Cartesian modes of dualism are out, and psychology and theology and philosophy all insist that man is a psychosomatic unity. Nevertheless, I believe that many

[4] *Aldous Huxley: Satirist and Novelist*. By PETER FIRCHOW. Minnesota University Press, $7.95, £4.

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people do instinctively feel otherwise, finding a division between mind and body in the depths of their daily experience, and that Huxley's articulate expression of such a division may be part of his continuing appeal.

So, indeed, may another kind of dualism, namely, the palpable split between form and content in his novels. For a long time it has been accepted literary opinion that Huxley's novels are inadequate because they are organically unified transformations of experience. Without doubt, compared with the splendid aesthetic unity achieved by James or Conrad or Joyce or Virginia Woolf, Huxley's novels are clumsy, ready-made vehicles, for conversations and random but predictable incidents, with a heavy thematic content. The continuing taste for Huxley's fiction may, however, represent a tacit underground resistance to the triumph of the Modern Movement and its aesthetic canons. More than we imagine, contemporary readers may preserve a taste for simple narratives, wittily told, with a little action, a moderate amount of sex and a good deal of talk that is clever without being difficult. If I am right, Huxley's novels, at least the early ones, will go on being read for a long time, whatever the critics say. Even so, the writing of more books about Huxley—apart from a full and reliable biography—would be a work of supererogation.

Larks and Theories

Recent Shakespeare Criticism—By Emrys Jones

THE MOST OPAQUE TITLE among these recent books on Shakespeare is *Like to the Lark*.[1] The book itself is also the most light-weight. Undeterred by the absence of new evidence, Mr Pohl offers to reconstruct the "lost years" in Shakespeare's life. As a contribution to biography or literary history it is not, I am afraid, worth much, the method used being hopelessly, fantastically, lax; but its final chapter is a little more interesting. It argues that a more or less unknown picture in an American private collection is a contemporary portrait of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson playing chess; the artist is said to be Karel van Mander, master of Franz Hals. The picture, reproduced by Mr Pohl, has charm and a certain vivacity, and for a short time I found myself hoping that Mr Pohl was right—that this was in fact a new authentic image of Shakespeare's face. But one soon recognises that it is very probably a 19th-century fake: it gives us too precisely what we want Shakespeare to be: he is too quick and sensitive, too humorously modest, too easily winning his chess-game with Ben Jonson. The portrait of Donne that came to light a few years ago was altogether different in its impact. It made Donne look like an Elizabethan Erroll Flynn: as an image it was amusing but tawdry, slightly repellent and certainly disconcerting. The portrait of Shakespeare offered here all too sweetly flatters our expectations. This, one regretfully concludes, is a fantasy-image; it isn't resistant enough to be true.

No doubt none of us can altogether escape an element of fantasy in the images we construct of Shakespeare; the only question is whether the one we have selected is, all things considered, the most likely, the least fantastic, available. In what is certainly the cleverest of these books Leslie Fiedler puts into circulation a new image of Shakespeare with a very high fantasy-content indeed. *The Stranger in Shakespeare*[2] was written, he tells us, primarily for himself: "Nonetheless, I consider this study not an act of self-indulgence but rather one of *ascesis*, since anyone confronting Shakespeare begins with chutzpah and joy but ends in humility and terror." One must report that, whatever terror Mr Fiedler may have privately experienced, there is not the slightest trace of humility discernible anywhere; if anything, the book is exhilaratingly brash. And if this is Mr Fiedler's idea of "*ascesis*", one can only wonder what he's like in a self-indulgent mood. This study of Woman, Jew, Black Man and New World Savage (i.e. Caliban) operates confessedly "on the level of myth and dream" and so apparently absolves the author from the obligation to be in any way responsible in the use he makes

[1] *Like to the Lark*. By FREDERICK J. POHL. Davis-Poynter, £3.00.
[2] *The Stranger in Shakespeare*. By LESLIE FIEDLER. Croom Helm, £3.75.

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of literary evidence. As light entertainment the book succeeds: one is held by the surprise-value of whatever Mr Fiedler says next. The prose races sleekly along, the plays flash by—and it seems not greatly to matter that they are only glimpsed in fuzzy outline, contours flattened, differences wiped out. At one point, indeed, Mr Fiedler assumes the role of scrupulous critic, seriously concerned with what the author meant—"We cannot, however, without distorting the meaning of the play fail to take into account . . ." —and the gesture, so out of character, comes as yet another quasi-narrative surprise. For Mr Fiedler's procedure has all along entailed distortion of meaning, pressing play after play into whatever direction he wants it to go, presenting Portia as a "witch" ("as 'supersubtle' a Venetian as Desdemona herself"), Polonius as an "overfond father" to whom his "lovely" daughter brings death, and, perhaps most strikingly, Caliban as a poet with "Whitmanian" affinities, his freedom song "the first American poem." A few years ago Leo Marx wrote an essay on *The Tempest* (not mentioned by Mr Fiedler) called "Shakespeare's American Fable," which concluded: "*The Tempest* might be read as a prologue to American literature." With Mr Fiedler the next intemperate step is taken, and the play now seems all set for inclusion in American Literature courses.

The Stranger in Shakespeare is about Shakespeare's alleged fantasies and is itself a prolonged fantasy. One only wishes that a critic of Mr Fiedler's uncommon abilities had written another book—closely related to this—whose contents one can dimly see out of the corner of one's eye. If he had slowed down and done some more 16th-century reading, he might well have taught us something about Shakespeare's unconscious attitudes to his four groups of "strangers." But it would have involved a far more laborious operation, a real act of "*ascesis*": putting Shakespeare into the context of Renaissance Europe, and finding out to what extent, if any, he was eccentric. It would be the kind of disciplined historical investigation which G. K. Hunter has undertaken on *Othello* and colour prejudice. But for that kind of work, one fancies, Mr Fiedler has no taste.

LIKE MR FIEDLER, Alex Aronson[3] leaves one with the impression that he is finally less interested in Shakespeare than in something else, which has the effect of crowding Shakespeare out. *Psyche and Symbolism in Shakespeare* is a sustained attempt, in a way impressive, to translate Shakespeare into the language of Jungian psychology. The brute question is unavoidable. Was it worth the effort? At one point the application of Jung's doctrine of the Shadow to such character-pairs as Falstaff-Hal, Cassius-Brutus, and Parolles-Bertram arouses a certain interest: here at least Mr Aronson is drawing attention to a real feature of the plays which one can fruitfully think about, though not necessarily in Jungian terms. Otherwise, though sober and sensible in many of its incidental remarks, the book in bulk seems a sad misapplication of intelligence, an unnecessary labour.

AFTER A SOJOURN in Mr Fiedler's phantom realm of dream symbols and mythic complexes and Mr Aronson's adjacent world of animus and anima and Shadow, Alan Hobson's *Full Circle*[4] comes as a relief: its Shakespeare is at least recognisable, while he himself is one of those critics, not so very great in number, whose strong point is people, what they are actually like; which in the context of Shakespeare's plays is a decided advantage. Admittedly he begins in a way calculated to put most people off, with an overliberal use of such deadening abstractions as Order, Degree, Harmony, and what not; his book needs cutting. I recommend starting in the middle and reading the first half second, so coming full circle in a sense perhaps not intended by the author. What he professes to do is to examine some of the plays with a view to finding what, for Shakespeare, makes the good life, what leads to happiness. Wholesome commonplace is not always avoided, but some enliveningly fresh discussions are the rewards in the course of a somewhat rambling enquiry. He is perceptive on the characters of Henry VI and Richard III, an analysis that increases one's sense of the psychological realism of these early histories; he is perhaps best of all on *Twelfth Night*. He manages to write morally about Sir Toby without heaviness and with point: "He is a parasite, and his 'fun' is always at someone else's expense; his contempt for others is but thinly disguised by his hearty word and his play-acting." "Parasite" places him exactly: Sir Toby probably does descend from the stock parasite of Roman and Italian comedy—we aren't meant to like him particularly. This is a clear improvement on those earlier readings which saw in Sir Toby's scenes little more than a "genial" festive jollity. At his best Mr Hobson reminded me of the master of this kind of criticism, Dr Johnson; by which I intend high praise.

[3] *Psyche and Symbolism in Shakespeare*. By ALEX ARONSON. Indiana University Press, $10.00, £4.60.

[4] *Full Circle*. By ALAN HOBSON. Chatto & Windus, £2.75.

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With Michael Goldman's book[5] we focus on the specifically theatrical Shakespeare. Shakespearean criticism has of course profited from the revived drama of the last twenty years and the renewed interest in dramatic theory that has gone with it: Mr Goldman's book comes in on the recent wave of dramaturgical studies. He begins by trying to define the nature of the *rapport* that is established between actors and audience during a performance. An essential part of an actor's job is to interest people not so much *in* as *with* his body, for in the theatre we are, he says,

> especially conscious of bodies, the actors' bodies, the bodies of the more or less closely packed audience (more closely packed in Shakespeare's theater than in ours), and whatever other images of the body are established or roused in our minds by what we see and hear.

The book takes off from this perception—that the special conditions of a play in performance generate a "heightened bodily awareness" in the audience and with it a mood uncommonly receptive to ideas and feelings about selfhood. So in some of Shakespeare's earlier plays, for example, we find young men and women (Berowne, Juliet, Beatrice and Benedick) in various ways holding back from a full engagement with the self before being forced by the action into it. And this is something, or so Mr Goldman declares, that can only be fully explored in drama.

The theoretical parts of the book are a little too briskly expounded, for they hardly amount to a watertight case. Why such a theme as "the unsounded self" (a phrase made much of by Mr Goldman, taken from *Lucrece*) should be so peculiarly theatrical is not made altogether clear. Mr Goldman can't have failed to notice that the same theme, or something very like it, is also quite common in the novel. He is content to offer it as a suggestive notion (which it is) rather than stay longer to work out a more generally useful theory. What he does well—and this is the core of the book—is to show how diversely Shakespeare exploits the physically-based actor-audience sympathy, as in the glamour and violence of *Romeo and Juliet*, the intensely realised bulking presence of Falstaff, the heroic oratorical exertions of Chorus and King in *Henry V*, and the crowd-scenes of *Coriolanus*. He is best on *King Lear*, on its insistent painfulness, and on how, ever since the 17th century, actors and audiences have tried to find ways of making it easier to take. But the play itself, with its effects of repetition, monotony, disappointment and shock, knows how to thwart the escapist impulse. If anyone had time for only one chapter, this is the one to read.

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[5] *Shakespeare and the Energies of Drama*. By MICHAEL GOLDMAN. Princeton University Press, $7.95, £4.00.

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THE HEART'S FOREST[6] (the phrase is from Wyatt) is about Shakespeare's "pastoral" plays—the term flexibly interpreted in the post-Empsonian way so as to include not only the obvious romances but also *King Lear*. This is a well-informed scholarly venture, liveliest on *As You Like It*, and bringing into clearer focus those romance areas of *Lear*—"winter and rough weather"—which can be said to abut on to *As You Like It*. T. R. Henn's[7] collection of essays clarifies for the layman Shakespeare's allusions to field sports (hawking as well as hunting, shooting and fishing) and to military weapons. Although it takes such a narrow area for its subject—or because it does—this modest book is highly successful: it's a pleasure to have so much solid information so considerately imparted. Throughout it the sense of Elizabethan reality is very strong—no self-indulgent fantasy-images here. One is left seeing some items in Shakespeare's world more clearly than before.

[6] *The Heart's Forest*. By DAVID YOUNG. Yale University Press, $7.95, £3.25.
[7] *The Living Image*. By T. R. HENN. Methuen, £2.50.

Unhappy Families are all Alike

New Views of Ivy Compton-Burnett—By MALCOLM BRADBURY

ON 29 AUGUST 1969, after a spell of bronchitis, Ivy Compton-Burnett, not only one of the best-known but one of the most long-lived novelists of her generation, died in her London flat at the age of 85, writing up to the last. By conventional standards her life had been a quiet one; as Elizabeth Sprigge notes, in her rather slim biography,[1] written from a standpoint of friendship, she described herself as someone who hadn't been "at all deedy." She grew up in dense and demanding family circumstances; her father, a well-known homœopathic doctor, James Compton-Burnett, had married twice and produced two families, having six children by his first wife and seven by his second. Ivy was the first of the seven, and was to inherit many responsibilities when the parents were gone. The family split, but Ivy never married, and most of her life was spent in female company; the flat in London where she lived much of it was shared with the writer Margaret Jourdain up to Miss Jourdain's death in 1951. She was not much engaged in historical affairs, or politics; the bigger issues of the century did not concern her directly. She wore her hair in a band low on her forehead, in the classical style of her youth; she maintained and expected polite manners; she did excellent embroidery, and was a modest collector of jewelry; she habitually voted Conservative. Her life was spent very locally but it was touched with sharp tragedies. The most terrible was the loss of two younger sisters, who during the First World War were found dead in bed from overdoses of veronal in strange circumstances.

Yet from this seemingly quiet life she wrote, abundantly. She published twenty novels. The last was pieced together and published posthumously, being written in her last days; the first, *Dolores*, which was published in 1911 and thus antedates the "mature" sequence by 14 years, she came to disown. It was in *Pastors and Masters* in 1925 that the main work began, and you might say that like William Faulkner with *Sartoris* she discovered a universe of her own which she was always to continue populating. She now started publishing under the reticent name of "I. Compton-Burnett", sexually confusing to some of her readers, and most of the main sequence came out as slimmish, economical and very abstemiously-presented books, in yellow Gollancz bindings, all appearing very much kin among themselves, and all having a universe and a tone in common. The universe was reassuring, but the tone not. It was savagely aphoristic and ironic, and touched the world she handled with sensationalism and a devastating moral exposure which was less an attack on it than on life itself. The mixture of reticence and sensationalism, of nostalgia and irony, attracted much attention, and this finally became a high reputation. After the Second World War she won a good many public honours for her books, and the critics became attentive. However, the books were, and remain, ambiguous. One could see in them a kind of essential artlessness, or else a very high kind of artistic management, a precision of control both moral and technical of the most eminent sort. One could read them as an elegant camp game played with life, or as a harsh and cruel, almost a tragic, vision of experience. And one could find them either basically reassuring novels, nostalgic under the wit and malice, or else profoundly disturbing works. These questions

[1] *The Life of Ivy Compton-Burnett*. By ELIZABETH SPRIGGE. Gollancz, £3.

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raise others about the entire tone of her feelings about life, and about her technical assurance and her general contribution to the modern novel, in which she has undoubtedly played the part of a goad and an influence. It is perhaps appropriate, though somewhat disappointing, that the new biography should share some of the same reticence that underlies her work and makes her mysterious and ambiguous. But why is she so?

I. COMPTON-BURNETT is—in the very strict sense of the term—a conventional writer; she writes, that is, to her own made convention. As any attentive admirer will tell you, any one novel is very different from any other, making its own world afresh. Even so, it has to be admitted that Violet Powell's new *Compton-Burnett Compendium*,[2] which is largely devoted to recounting the plots of her novels with skill, insight and elegance, has its special uses in this particular case, since for various reasons the novels do tend to blur one into another. This is partly the consequence of the very dramatic style she affects. While her minimalisation of character-description has, as Elizabeth Sprigge says, been overstated, it still remains a fact that she early saw the uses of a persistent underplaying of explicit character detail, generating a drama of mystification in which the clear characteristics of persons are often subordinated to the total intercourse of the particular group or scene of which they are a part. But more important is the fact that the novels are set in a distinctive world of motives, principles, and experiences, a very sparse and cruel one, which is manifested in every novel as a single social world. In its historical place, this world can be dated and fixed: this is England, its landed gentry, in the period around 1880–1910, a period roughly coinciding with the author's birth and reaching (on occasion) through toward her maturity, though usually stopping short. It is an historically arrested world, one kept very pure by the author, like an Amish community resisting modernisation from developments subsequent to its foundation. Its citizens move in horse-drawn carriages, maintain landed estates in adverse circumstances, produce large families, frequently sired on two or more wives, have many unmarried dependents, and—despite the endless struggle for money, which next to desire for power and place produces most of the action—maintain a servant corps and that most necessary of Victorian functionaries, a governess.

However, it is not quite a real world, and for certain obvious reasons. One useful service Violet Powell performs is to give us in her book an admirable little sociology of this world, to which she adds:

> As interesting as the professions and social habits prevalent in the world of Compton-Burnett are the professions which are not followed, and the habits which do not prevail. No one is, or has ever been, in the service of the Crown. Country gentlemen never join the yeomanry. . . . No faint note of a bugle, no rumbling of a distant gun-carriage, disturbs the landscape in which purely domestic campaigns are conducted. . . . Organized games are not permitted to any grown-up or child. . . . The county assemblies and hunt balls, which might be expected to play their part in settling young ladies in life with suitable husbands, are not frequented, or even mentioned. Consequently the marriages among first cousins (sometimes double) are hardly surprising, though after *Brothers and Sisters* no incestuous marriage occurs. . . .

But these are apparently economies of choice, and the purposes of the choice seem patent; I. Compton-Burnett not only makes but isolates a society. The convention is in some ways very fictional indeed, a recourse to a world established in other, and much earlier novels. "It doesn't seem to matter everything's being in books already; I don't mind at all," says Charity Marcon, the writer in *Daughters and Sons* (1937), who gets the books she is writing out of the British Museum. A real part of Miss Compton-Burnett's novels, too, was in the British Museum when she began writing them: Jane Austen, Henry James, the mid-Victorian governess novels, Edmund Gosse and above all Samuel Butler, the strongest influence on her both in the creation of her social world and in her angle of moral attack upon it. Her novels, indeed, don't so much belong to a period as conventionalise a historical phase suitable to her temper, her interests, her sense of human nature, and her feelings about the arena in which the basic aspects of human action are most really exposed. This arena is the family, within whose limits most of the action is confined, and the historical period she uses is one when the family was at its apogee, reinforced not only by that apparatus of servants, governesses, family solicitors and inheritance laws which she draws on for her cast and her plots, but also by concepts of power and patriarchy themselves profoundly interwoven with religious beliefs. This makes family life a total functional milieu. But it is also notable that she sets her book right on the edge of this phase of things, for the attack on the family in this solidly institutional form was already active in the late Victorian age she writes of—often conducted, especially in novels like *The Way of All Flesh* and *Father and Son*, through the instrument of a high agnostic irony showing the moral threats to egotism of this closed world. I. Compton-Burnett's novels act as if they were

[2] *A Compton-Burnett Compendium*. By VIOLET POWELL. Heinemann, £3.

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synchronic with such books; but the difference is that her world is that much more artificial, much cooler, more distant, and given in the distilled hard manner of more modern novels. In this way they turn into timeless works, novels about the Laingian politics of the unhappy family, seen above all as a struggle for power, precedence and affection in a world of self-knowing agents capable of arbitrary or half-revealed emotions, sudden emotional shifts and peccadilloes, and legal violations of every kind up to incest and murder.

"ALL HAPPY FAMILIES are more or less dissimilar; all unhappy ones are more or less alike." So, according to the author of *Ada,* begins that great Russian classic, *Anna Arkadievitch Karenina,* in the mysteriously unobtainable R. G. Stonelower translation. The translation wants merit, but it serves—as Nabokov doubtless means it to—to remind us how often novels and unhappy families do go together. In grander species, like tragedy and epic, the characteristic forum of the action may be the court and the dynasty, where the high complexities of duty, power, and the great historical forces can all accumulate and interact. In the novel-form, which tends to be more local, it is frequently within the experience of the single family that an entire politics of living takes place—ego abrades ego, power and patriarchy struggle with love, the great intersections of sex with sex and generation with generation occur, and human nature becomes knowable and known. This is surely one reason why Miss Compton-Burnett's novels do manage so persistently to obsess us; and why it is they seem, in their way, ur-novels. For if in one sense they have a fixed historical setting, they are in another quite timeless—the conventionalised family becomes all families, and the result is an opening up of those unending vistas of struggle for power, precedence, money and love we call family life. Miss Compton-Burnett, conventionalising a society and in her way universalising it, creates a world of grand self-awareness, where characters are capable of seeing themselves both in the light of their own egoism and in large schemas of power, precedence and affection, where even children know and utter the telling conditions of their own tenure (" 'Will she be over Grandma, or will Grandma be over her?' said Hengist"), and where the outright laws of the emotional jungle prevail. "What a day it has been!" says Hugo in *The Mighty and Their Fall* (1961). "There is material for an epic. The fall of Lavinia; the return of Ransom; the uplift of Ninian. . . ." Material for a epic, indeed; and in many respects the result is some such classical mode, which is why the

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analogy between Miss Compton-Burnett's novels and the Greek drama she studied at Royal Holloway College has been made so often. The result is a fiction that seems to cross the regal courts and dynastic houses of tragedy with the sexual ambiguities and variations of French farce. The recurrent principle or paradox is a comic one—the profoundly exercised restraint of the novelist, paring down the telling in the direction of dialogue, simplified character-presentation and rapid plot-motion, interacts with the enormities of murder, incest, and an emotional promiscuity verging on the insane in persons capable, as all are, of high reason and self-knowledge. And it is telling because it is essentially anguished:

> "We have not settled the best thing in life," said Lavinia.
> "Human friendship?" said Egbert.
> "But it is sometimes shared," said Hugo.
> "And it is uncertain," said Teresa. "We want something we cannot lose.". . .
> "What should we really choose?" said Ninian.
> "We have not said."
> "An affection that would last," said Teresa; "in ourselves as well as in someone else; that would be a basis for our lives."
>
> (*The Mighty and Their Fall*)

But it rarely is. You could say that Miss Compton-Burnett ignores all the possible emotional gains in the pleasure of exposing, like some familial Marxist, the substructure of interest. Her irony has a moral passion to it, but it is in the end very carping and modern; it is this that helps bring her work into relation to other great contemporary novels. Where did it come from? How was the vision made? The trouble with both of these new books—Violet Powell's compendium, Elizabeth Sprigge's biography—is that they give us much information without giving us anything close to an answer. As I. Compton-Burnett was always ready to assume, to tell the surface is only to begin to tell, though it was also her assumption that it is with the surface that you tell it. These are useful books, but there will be more and better ones to come.

The Characters of Artifice

Pushkinian Criticism—By PETER CONRAD

JOHN BAYLEY AND PUSHKIN were intended for each other.[1] As a critic, Mr Bayley possesses the same qualities which excite him in Pushkin as a creator—a brilliantly paradoxical instinct for the relations between art and life, a delight in form, and a sense of the fascinating deceptiveness of poetic structures, which so teasingly intertwine truth and feint, reality and artifice. His criticism seems positively exhilarated by Pushkin's example, and it dazzlingly transforms life into art, as, he says, in Pushkin's poem "the gipsies are metamorphosed into *The Gipsies*." And yet Mr Bayley's writing never has the icy glitter of formalist criticism for which, in Mallarmé's phrase, the world exists merely to be turned into a book. In a piece on Auden published some years ago in *Encounter*,[2] Mr Bayley argued that Auden's was the only criticism of Shakespeare which was Shakespearean in spirit—its very improbability was in harmony with the audacity of the characters, its suggestive opening-up of new possibilities echoing their pursuit of new and startlingly contradictory ways of being themselves. Cleopatra transforms herself from a trull into a goddess; Falstaff by the almost heroic force of his self-assertion forces us to share his view of himself—and the same sense of freedom and what Henry James called irresponsibility occurs in Auden's critical fantasias on the plays.

If Auden's criticism of Shakespeare is Shakespearean, then Mr Bayley's Pushkin criticism is Pushkinian. Reading his book is like reading *Evgeny Onegin*: there is the same insight into form interwoven with insight into human character, the same continual discovery of unexpected perspectives. "The depth of the thing," he says of Pushkin's work, ". . . is in the contrasts and confrontations which its artificiality makes possible"; and a similar enriching contrast and confrontation occur between the literary works Mr Bayley discusses. For instance, seeking to explain the elusiveness of *Onegin* through Pushkin's manipulation of the stanza form, he draws the Shakespearean sonnet sequence into the comparison to show how this atmosphere of secrecy and uncertainty is created by a formalistic device:

> The poet appears to commit himself, plays with that appearance, withdraws, modifies his approach, introduces and repeats with variations another theme; again reveals himself, and again compounds the revelation with a change of tone and the introduction of a further set of variations. . . . When we think we have him we find he is no longer there, and his words open out an ambiguous glitter of perspective, the very opposite of a poetic *paysage moralisée*.

[1] *Pushkin: A Comparative Commentary*. By JOHN BAYLEY. Cambridge University Press, £4.60.
[2] John Bayley, "Our Northern Manichee," July 1968.

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Mr Bayley has the same command of the relative and the equivocal: he does not expound the poems or decode them or resolve them into a thesis, but leads us through their formal maze with what he would call a sleep-walker's instinct for its intricate twists and turns.

Mr Bayley is too conscious of the openness of Pushkin's masterpieces—their insouciant way of allowing us to extract whatever we wish, while remaining unexplained, still guarding their secret—ever to wish to be schematic. Formalism, he points out, needs to make the

> all-important value-distinction between the work whose content is indeed determined by the perception of its form, and the work whose content . . . transcends them. . . . "A masterpiece of formalism"—if it means anything—must mean a work whose artifice has liberated meaning and created a wide field of human speculation.

Again and again in disentangling Pushkin's parodies Mr Bayley does precisely this, liberating meaning from artifice, revealing how new forms make possible new characters. Whereas Shakespeare's Angelo sprawls into the rowdy life of *Measure for Measure* and so evades diagnosis or interpretation, Pushkin's version of him, Andzhelo, is seen through, anatomised, because the spare, summary form of the *Little Tragedies* allows no room for comedy or incongruity; the leisure and liberty Shakespeare's creations enjoy and often make unscrupulous use of are curtailed. The alienation of Aleko in *The Gipsies* is likewise the product of the form: "Byronism in reverse has not placed him but depersonalised him: in stripping him of all that is inessential Pushkin has left him, by a typically brilliant paradox of his art, with nothing but 'the superfluous'."

IT IS MR BAYLEY'S special achievement to bring the glittering artifice of formalism together with its critical opposite, the fond and friendly trust of the Victorian novel-reader in the reality of fictional characters; he is, as it were, Barthes and Bradley at once. His chapter on *Onegin* mingles the two dissimilar approaches—as indeed does the poem, using a self-admiringly elaborate medium to present novelistic, prosaic subject-matter. The Victorians sent letters to their novelists imploring mercy for favourite characters who were in danger, or asking what other characters went on to do, after their release from the novel into private life; for them—as for Bradley with his detective-work into the biographies of Shakespeare's people—the characters were larger than the novels or plays through which they passed. Their existence lay outside the confines of art; they submitted to being used by the novelist or dramatist (as Micawber suffers himself to be jerked out of his splendid, futile self-involvement in order to prepare the case against Uriah Heep), but remained independent (Hamlet is a cautionary instance: he would rather talk about himself to the audience than get on with the job of revenge Shakespeare has somewhat unsuitably assigned him). The Victorians possessed a naïve faith that the characters are there when we are not looking at them; and Mr Bayley's particular critical art lies in exploring this state of literary innocence with all the resources of formalist experience. Maurice Morgann was able to build up, from a purely hypothetical biography of Falstaff, a view of him quite opposite to that suggested by the play; Mr Bayley extends this eager suspension of disbelief into a fascinating discussion of how far characters are imprisoned inside a work of art and how far they can live outside it, how far they are placed by their creator and how far they escape him. This is a question very appropriate to Tsarist Russia, for in his book on Tolstoy Mr Bayley suggested that the large imaginative freedom of the characters of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky derives from their lack of social freedom: they are free because they are in permanent revolt against their society, because they have not internalised its rules. (Dickens's characters exist in a similar state, constricted into caricature-like distortions by their society, and yet clinging to their individuality with the cheerful, defiant anarchism of Mrs Gamp's "Gamp's my name, and Gamp's my nater".) In contrast with this unruly freedom, it is the modern novels of the West which are totalitarian, for in them the characters are the obedient servants of their creators, conscripted for service, put to work in their moral fables, permitted only the small ration of life they need to sustain this task. T. S. Eliot actually protests that James is too generous with Roderick Hudson, that he is not made to know his place, that he exceeds the novelist's requirement of him. And Forster's novels, though professing liberal principles—the values of Wiltshire against those of Sawston, Schlegels against Wilcoxes—are tight and illiberal in structure: the characters are made to march in the novel's moral procession, to wear its uniform, and may even be liquidated, like poor Leonard Bast beneath the book-case, to prove its point, for the autocratic novelist has the power of life and death over his subjects. Pushkin protests against this straitjacketing of a character inside a conception in some table-talk of 1836 contrasting Molière and Shakespeare: Molière's miser can express a single obsession only, whereas Shylock is free to contradict himself, to be "avaricious, resourceful, revengeful, a devoted father, a man of wit and sharp intelligence." Mr Bayley points out that Fanny Price is weakened by having to carry the burden of embodying

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evangelical principles outside the novel, whereas it is artistically impossible that Pushkin could have made Onegin embody Decembrist principles.

PUSHKIN IS NEVER schematic. His parodies do not, like those of the Augustans, turn life into treacherous artifice, creating works whose delight is to trap and bemuse the ingenuous reader; parody for him is a way of more closely matching literature with life, of opening poetry into human possibility rather than enclosing it in aesthetic self-sufficiency. The contrast between the aesthetically determined part of *Evgeny Onegin* and the life which spreads outside its margins—the life of the hero's uncle, the heroine's nurse, mother and aunt—is, Mr Bayley reveals, the contrast between Onegin as Art and Tatyana as Life. Form and nature are delicately and quizzically balanced, and one is reminded of Mr Bayley's account, in *The Characters of Love*, of the very similar relation between the *Comédie Française* artificiality of the plot of *The Golden Bowl*, and the breadth and incalculability of the novel's meaning: James's ending, like Pushkin's, is "a kind of liberation, a rounding off in which the artifice of the theatre combines with the resonances of life to form a perfect equilibrium." It is Pushkin's genius for parody which makes him a novelist—for the history of the novel has, in a sense, been a development through successive parodies. Fielding parodies the prurient intimacy of Richardson, Jane Austen the novel of sensibility and the Gothic adventure, Thackeray the silver-fork novel of high society; Dickens excels in the ventriloquistic imitation of worn-out styles, as in his account of the Chuzzlewit pedigree, or the novel about the Lady Flabella and the young, slim, low-voiced Befillaire which Kate Nickleby reads to Mrs Wititterley. At the beginning of the novel's history is *Tristram Shandy* which, battling to force its digressions and scurrilous associations of ideas into a pedantic order, subversively parodies the notions of form, rule and plan; at its end is *Ulysses*, a museum of parody preserving specimens of dead styles from the Anglo-Saxon chronicles to Paul de Kock. Joyce's parodies are valedictory, a sort of wax-works, an elegy for a dead language; but Pushkin's open the way for the great Russian novelists. Literary history is for Joyce a nightmare from which he cannot escape: oppressed by the past, his work has to be a summation, circumscribed by what has gone before it. His style cannot move without encountering some ghost from the past; but this depressing sense of enclosure in an echoing museum of tradition is absent from Pushkin, and indeed from Russian literature. As John Bayley explained in *Tolstoy and the Novel*, its Renaissance came late and the literary life-cycle was correspondingly speeded

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up: the English accomplishment of three hundred years was telescoped into fifty, producing a strange sense of fore-shortening, as if Shakespeare had lived on to read Oscar Wilde. Pushkin thus seems to be Shakespeare, Byron and Joyce at once, at once at the pristine beginning and the knowing end of a literary history.

Onegin is a sort of fusion of the egotistic artifice of *Don Juan* and the tranquil realism of George Eliot's scenes of provincial manners. In the English 19th century poetry and the novel gradually draw apart, the novel in its pursuit of the quality of actual life becoming increasingly forgetful of its medium; but Pushkin is able, without compromising the realism, to draw attention to the medium, jauntily to admit the artificiality of the enterprise. His verse-novel is at once poetic and novelistic, whereas those of the Victorians—*The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*, *The Angel in the House*, even *The Ring and the Book*—remain rather dispirited attempts to compete with the novel, faintly embarrassed by their medium, a verse which is no more than prose by other means.

THE PUSHKIN summoned up by Mr Bayley speaks for himself in Miss Wolff's splendid collection of letters, notes, conversational asides and essays on literature,[3] and the relation between his criticism and his poetry is exceptional. Romantic poets are generally vain theorisers, defining new directions for literature, foreseeing a future but unable to thrust their own work into it: the epic confidence of Hugo's division of the literary realm in the preface to *Cromwell* collapses into what Pushkin called "the halting steps of the dull and monstrous play"; Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria*, deserted by his vision, takes to analysis and explanation. The romantics are obsessed by Shakespeare ("*quel homme que ce Schakespeare!*" exclaims Pushkin), and they are his best critics, but all their attempts to be Shakespearean fail: even the Elizabethan double plot of *Boris Godunov*—the scene at the frontier inn, the Tsar's confrontation with the simpleton seem rather studied. Theory and practice are troublesomely contradictory: two types of poetic creativity are defined, and the poets restlessly aspire to their opposite. The theory insists that the classical poet vanishes into the perfection of his creation, while the modern poet obtrudes—for Schiller this is the difference between the naïve Homer and the sentimental Byron, for Keats that between the negative capability of the dramatic poet and the egotistical sublime of his contemporaries—and the romantics strain to become what they are not. Lacking the distance of the dramatist, who stands back from his characters and allows them to act for themselves, they still set themselves to write tragedies; perfervid romantics like Byron or Delacroix claim to be austerely classical; Keats's critical conscience leads him to abandon the pictorial luxury of his early verse for an inflexible grandeur. The poems are determined by an idea, burdened by self-consciousness; the poets are consumed by a high seriousness which derives from and ministers to their omnivorous egotism. To all of this, Pushkin, as Miss Wolff's anthology shows, is an exception: he has no complacent sense of himself as an unacknowledged legislator, by his own spirit deified, and he maintains in a letter "I sang as a baker bakes, as a tailor sews, as Kozlov writes, as a doctor kills—for money, for money, for money." He recoils from the oppressive intimacy of the other romantic poets into the detached role of the virtuoso, the impersonal artist. His poems are not, like *The Prelude* or *Don Juan*, dependent on him, and he was able to disavow an early work, Mr Bayley explains, because "it was not 'a part of his being' but an exercise in a genre which appealed to him." Pushkin withdraws to the impartial distance of the dramatist or novelist, respecting the independence of his characters rather than employing them as the creatures of his fantasy, or anxiously probing and questioning, in the impatient manner of the romantic poet, "how is it that you live, and what is it you do?" Hence the paradox of *Onegin*, as Mr Bayley sums it up: the poet who ought, in the manner of Sterne or Rousseau, to have button-holed us into confessional intimacy retreats to an elusive point at which love and death become the materials of his octosyllabic artifice. "As a sentimental novel *Evgeny Onegin* is like nature without God, and Pushkin, the *deus absconditus*, turns the subjective sensibility into an objective property, ornament, and plaything."

Mr Bayley wonders, in his first chapter, about the propriety of a study of Pushkin in English. Translation can make possible the migration of other writers from their native cultures to the museum without walls of world literature, and indeed Carlyle, in translating *Wilhelm Meister*, insisted that this internationalism was a duty: "Minds such as Goethe's are the common property of all nations and, for many reasons, all should have correct impressions of them." But Pushkin's language not only resists translation, his place in the Russian consciousness seems to make him less of a transplantable, universal figure than Shakespeare or Goethe or Tolstoy. However, Mr Bayley need not have worried—he and Miss Wolff have given us the means for making Pushkin a part of our literary experience.

[3] *Pushkin on Literature*. Translated and edited by TATIANA WOLFF. Methuen, £7.50.

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Global Charades

New Novels—By JONATHAN RABAN

WITH EACH NEW NOVEL, Angus Wilson's reputation grows larger, and acquires an ever more respectable, more matronly solidity. He is, so one is told in a tone that signifies a mixture of relief and boredom, our best traditional novelist. Like Huntley and Palmer biscuits, Gold Flake, and Cooper's Oxford Marmalade, an Angus Wilson novel, fat and soberly jacketed from Secker & Warburg, is a homely reassurance that our Edwardian nursery past really does survive into the cataclysmic present. He's *so* good on class . . . so intelligent about people like us . . . such a good *mimic*. More fun than Forster, gamier than Trollope, Wilson has been adopted by his admirers as a courtesy uncle. Like all the best uncles, his good value as an elaborately good-humoured raconteur and charming guide to the louche haunts of the genteel sexual underworld is tempered by a certain admirable stuffiness. For Wilson, the dear old thing, belongs to The English Novel. Indeed, in moments of post-imperial gloom, we sometimes fancy that Wilson is The English Novel, a lovable stegosaurus comfortably living out his days at the end of a tradition.

It must be admitted that there have been occasions when the nephews and nieces have felt twinges of alarm, suspected that the old boy was getting up to menopausal capers unfitting for his age and station. His last novel, *No Laughing Matter*, was built around a sequence of playlets written in the styles of Shaw, Pinero, Wilde and others, in which the characters in the book acted themselves and each other in a dramatic dazzle of assumed identities. Wilson's previous novel, *Late Call*, opened with a period pastiche in which the very Edwardian world which he is supposed to anachronistically inhabit was perceived through the wrong end of a telescope; was the author *winking*? The nephews and nieces were not altogether sure. Had these peculiar, disturbing devices issued from any other hand but that of Uncle, they would instantly have been recognised as symptoms of quite another sort of novel—the novel which takes its own form as a legitimate subject, which treats the rhetoric of character, the rhetoric, even, of the liberal humanist novel itself, with self-conscious circumspection. But surely Uncle hadn't been secretly reading Robbe-Grillet? At his age? There is something deeply repulsive to the English mind in the thought of the sole inheritor of Trollope and Forster wasting his legacy on a pile of *nouveaux romans*.

A reading of Angus Wilson which stresses his modernism, his internationalism, his self-consciousness as a writer is, in the current critical climate which has settled round his work like a fog, bound to be contentious. It should not be so. Since *The Old Men At The Zoo*, he has effected a revolution in the writing of English fiction which has gone almost unnoticed. He has continued to write novels of social life. With each book, he has brought a whole society alive, and has used what he could of the techniques of Thackeray and Dickens, salvaging from the 19th-century novel its curiosity, its huge appetite for heterogeneous forms of life, its spread, its bustling narrative agility. But every technique which he has retrieved from the past has been subtly recast, made to turn back on itself. The artfully old-fashioned surface of his fiction opens out to reveal a secret writing which is just as speculative, literary, and dextrously cerebral as that of the sharpest and most ingenious *nouveau romancier*. But, with more ambition, and, one suspects, more human experience than Robbe-Grillet, Wilson has transplanted these formal speculations about the nature of language and narrative from the abstract inquiry of the study to the theatre of society at large. In his work, there is a fruitful copulation between two traditions of the novel, one English, one French; and the publication of *As If By Magic*[1] is a major occasion in contemporary literary history. We have heard it said, by several of the same critics who have accorded Wilson his grotesquely inappropriate avuncular status, that John Berger's *G*, that soggy mish-mash of overblown social journalism, is the best English novel in sight. *As If By Magic* is European, as *G* was not; it is, unlike *G*, a work of great formal beauty and complexity; it shows, on every page, a certainty of understanding, the proper wisdom of the novelist, which commands assent and wonder.

As If By Magic is about enslavement—to dead forms, books, traditions, idioms—and freedom. It follows two inspired liberators, Hamo Langmuir, pederast and plant geneticist, and Alexan-

[1] *As If By Magic*. By ANGUS WILSON. Secker & Warburg, £2.50.

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dra Grant, a rich hippy just graduated from her new university, around the globe. Hamo heads West, to America, Japan, Ceylon, spreading the gospel of "Magic" rice, his marvellous hybrid which has the power to eradicate want and famine. Alexandra goes South and East, to live in a commune of mystical squatters on a Moroccan beach, then to seek out a swami. They meet in Goa, on the brink of a bloody riot. The book tries to take in the world; its twin heroes, the young and the middle-aged, the trim scrupulous man and the boy-girl with her illegitimate baby, pass through its seething populations with both the moral concern and the insouciance of the Hampstead drawing room from which they both set out. The world which they tour and encircle is a ruinous, over-fertile, miscegenated place, full of vulgar impostures and clumsy grafts of culture on culture—it is that "modern world" which we all inhabit and which is as much metaphor as fact. In it Europeans dress up in the rags of half-baked Asian religion, while Asians ineptly ape the manners of West Croydon; exiled commercial gentlemen keep up a wafer-thin charade of Kipling's India, in Ceylon; the Japanese create a kind of crude cartoon of a Californian homosexual brothel. There is nothing that has not been contaminated with something else, nothing properly placed, nothing which retains its own character.

FOR EACH CHARACTER, like each culture, is condemned to a life of charades. Some live out of books: Alexandra and her student friends, hooked on Lawrence and Tolkien, talk whimsically in Hobbit-language and go in for body-worship and Nature. For every situation in which they find themselves, there is a precedent in their English course, and they are always catching themselves out in half-conscious parody. Forster wrote this bit of life, Dickens that; they run halfway round the world in search of a vision of their own, only to find that they are still puppet characters, "fictive devices" as Alexandra exclaims angrily at the end, in the hands of dead authors. The dense literary allusiveness of *As If By Magic* has the same function as the playlets in *No Laughing Matter*; it imprisons the characters in the forms of the past, and we watch them, like pinned bugs, trying to wriggle free of the terrible second-hand literariness of their lives. "Damn English Literature! Damn the past and the future!" says Alexandra in the final sentences of the novel, "I have enough to do making something of the present." Thus cursing, weighed down by books and history, she totters stumpily, grimly, realistically, off into the end-papers.

Even Hamo's minimal reading—his science is of the kind which steers assiduously clear of

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fictions—keeps him twitching on his strings. In a gay magazine, there's an advertisement for another journal, with tiny photographs, just discernible with a magnifying glass, and tinier captions:

> Here Mack seems reluctant to take that evenin' shower, and Rod wrestles with him to get him under. But, hey, who's this? Well, this ain't fair. Two up against one. Pete—the blond stud who acts as hired boy around the place—is a hefty young giant too. They don't seem to be having too much difficulty in forcin' the rangy, curly-headed youngster under that stream of water. Uh huh, looks as though Mack's gonna lose his trunks. . . .

It is perhaps not quite up to the standard of D. H. Lawrence, but it serves: Hamo, hunting for The Most Beautiful Youth In The World—chest 30, waist 24, hips 35—is as encumbered by the literature of his particular persuasion as the most bookish of men, His good intentions, his liberalism, his scientific detachment are perpetually imperilled by a lust which is both highly abstract and theoretical, and unsatisfied.

Lives which are so enslaved to rhetoric tend constantly to farce. On the far side of the earnestness with which Hamo and Alexandra pursue their dreams around the world lies the pratfall, the vulgar, violent dénouement, when the hard edge of reality breaks through the bubble of language and illusion in which each character floats. In Hampstead, Hamo crashes to the floor, taking with him a Louis Quinze table and a valuable piece of china; it is a move he repeats many times. The novel is littered with brilliantly timed comic absurdities; Hamo exits, pursued, now by stones, now execrations, now laughter. For in this degenerated, chronically infected world, it is the fate of the tragic hero to slip on a banana skin. His seriousness, his gentleness, his generosity are all botched. He nurses a pure love for boys, but something always intervenes before he can achieve a climax in all his adventures; two boys die, meaninglessly and wantonly, because of his ineptitude. Even his "Magic" rice turns out to be a fraud, for it puts out of work the very peasants whom it was intended to feed. Enslaved, as much by the tradition of benign colonialism as by the erotic escapades of Rod and Mack, Hamo hurries towards a death which itself has the unexpectedness and indignity of farce.

As in farce, disguise and impersonation are constant conditions of the novel. For this is a world in which everything and everybody dissembles as something or somebody else. At one point, Hamo, angling for a bedroom scene with a houseboy, is caught pretending to be two different people at once—an elegant bachelor tourist called "Roger Sudbury", and an emissary from the London University board of external examinations, "Dr Malcolm." And when Alexandra's swami is revealed as a frightened charlatan who must either prove himself by performing a real miracle, or be torn to pieces by an angry crowd, Alexandra helps him escape by dressing him in her Oxfam fur coat and felt hat, and rouging up his face, turning him from a holy man into a grotesque pantomime dame. These are moments of baroque extravagance, but they bring to a climax all the small duplicities, the lies and false colours, of a society in which acting and sham are the normal currency of life. The world—which shifts, page by page, from being chillingly ordinary to being an outrageous phantasmagoria—is a place where nothing so befits its inhabitants as going about in drag.

As If By Magic is, on one level, an encyclopedia of the fancy clothes in which the people of the world strut to an illusory salvation. From literature to totalitarian politics, Atlantean science to soil biology, liberal humanism to dotty mysticism, hand-held cinema to the meta-novel, here are all the rags of learning, thought and belief in which the naked seek to dignify themselves. It is a pathetic and preposterous cavalcade, and Wilson sets it against that other world, as yet uncivilised, in which people still go hungry and unclothed. Alexandra and her friends squat nude on the beaches of Africa, playing at noble savagery for the summer within sight of local villagers for whom clothes and possessions are luxuries, and who find the prospect of the hippies incomprehensible and obscene.

SUCH EPIC, GLOBAL INCLUSIVENESS—an inclusiveness which does not fudge the violent, often melodramatic contrasts which it entails—has never been attempted before by a modern English novelist. No one since Conrad has ventured so boldly into the world and allowed the novel so large and rich a canvas. The sheer spread and density of Wilson's narrative have led him to techniques which are new both for him and for the novel at large. His world is held together by resemblances—by puns, coincidences, parodies, pastiches. The chance collision of two meanings in a single word simultaneously underlines the unlikeness of things and affords a means of linking up disparate bits of the world without imposing a spurious logical connection between them. So, in the first chapter, we move from Alexandra and her mime troupe to Hamo's sexual predilections by a pun on the word "chicken." Proust's cork walls turn into "cork balls"; a Singhalese newspaper editorial, inflamed by Hamo's attempts at political action, comes up with the accidental felicity of "Go home, Homo, we don't need your homilies or your home-spun theories." Parody, in *As If By Magic*, is a way of life, ranging from

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elaborate literary set-pieces to passing conversational reflexes. Everything the characters—and their author—have read, from *Little Dorrit* to "The Magic Roundabout," is pressed into service. In a world which has become so hopelessly separated from itself, the most trivial link is valuable. The swami, fake as he is, is wiser than most: his god is Vishnu, "a merry fellow," a cosmic joker who presides over a world of profoundly humorous accidents. He is not so far in spirit from Angus Wilson.

Indeed, Hamo and Alexandra, the epicene and the earth-mother, do resemble one of those eastern mystical statues of two human shapes, one male, one female, growing out of a single body. Late in the book, Alexandra has a premonition of her death at the hands of a crowd, but it is Hamo's death which she has foreseen. By the end, the two characters have merged into one another. Their seriousness, their intelligence, their honesty and their foolishness are compacted, and it is these qualities which survive. The bickering differences between them, of ideology, age, and style, are seen, finally, to be just the discarded finery of the drag show. It is the one triumphant note of optimism in a novel which is heavy with pessimistic laughter at the vanity and dissolution of the world.

I think we may have to wait a long time to know just how good a novel *As If By Magic* is. That in itself is some measure of its importance. At present, it is too rooted in contemporary detail, too provocative of what will eventually be irrelevant questions (such as how "accurately" Wilson places his rich hippies). It feels a very big, very fine fish indeed, but it is running too deep for it to be seen clearly. For fished-out English waters, it is certainly a marvel.

ANGUS WILSON has taken the novel on a grand tour of the world; Paul Theroux, in his latest and best book, *Saint Jack*,[2] has gone to a mean provincial outpost of the world and found there a bubbling crucible of large hopes and small failures—the stink of ordinary, personal human wreckage and its incidental charms and braveries. His Singapore is a dump; a place for drifters and dreamers, for people who have come unstuck from the world beyond. Malays, Tamils, Chinese, English and Americans occupy the island like a community of stranded seals. It has a Hilton Hotel and massage-parlour economy; its strongest binding cultural force is the National Lottery, in which people bet on the numbers of smashed cars and hotel rooms in which visiting G.I.s have hanged themselves. Its hero—the man

[2] *Saint Jack*. By PAUL THEROUX. Bodley Head, £2·25.

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who knows his way around and can tell its story—is Jack Flowers, born John Fiori, an Italian-American from the North End of Boston, a pimp, one-time brothel proprietor, and ship's chandler's assistant.

Flowers is the most innocent of all the Singapore dreamers, an adolescent still at 53, one of the perpetually hopeful. In the Bandung Club, where the expats go soggy with gin and dirty stories in the heat, the most a man can hope for is an MBE in the Birthday Honours list. But Jack Flowers has higher things in mind—fame, wealth, sainthood. "Even the most rational soul has at least one moment of pleasurable reflection when he hears a small voice addressing him as *Your Radiance*. I had a litany which began *Sir Jack*, *President Flowers*, *King John*, and so forth. And why stop at King? *Saint Jack*!" Saints, after all, have sometimes had worse occupations than the charitable job of fixing up "the fellers" with everything they want. For a while, sponsored by a lisping CIA man called Schuck (the Chinese girls pronounce it Fuck), he even runs a luxury brothel called Paradise Gardens, where American soldiers spend their five-day leaves from Viet Nam; but the army closes it down.

His closest, most secret ambition, though, is to be a writer, to preserve and sanctify life in stories. "Fiction seemed to give me the second chances life denied me." And Singapore needs all the second chances it can get. Not that Flowers is alone: the Bandung club is full of "fictors," shabby liars who coat reality with a protective gloss of pastel-coloured varnish. A visiting tax accountant from Hong Kong dies of a thrombosis in the club, his last words, "Does this establishment have a toilet?" His eyes are hardly closed before the club members are busy preparing a sentimental fiction for his widow, about how he died in peace in the Botanical Gardens under the shade of an *angsana* tree. Flower's only real claim to sainthood is that he is prepared to love reality, the world *as is*, to accept its vulgarities and contradictions. *Saint Jack*, his memoirs, the longest and most truthful of his stories, is the testament of a man who has tried, in all humility, to love a world of junk and flotsam.

THEROUX IS FASCINATED by the ways in which reality may be misrepresented. The problem of Singapore is essentially a problem of interpretation. The novel is full of stories, records, photographs—plausible fakes, glib cover-ups. Pornographic pictures, in which Flowers deals in a small, embarrassed way, betray the sex they depict. Paradise Gardens, by the time the novel comes to be told, only exists in a fat album of photos, "our history." The prints themselves—

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Me in my flowered shirt, having a beer with three fellers, Mr Loy Hock Yin holding a huge Thanksgiving turkey on a platter—are bland and neutral; they need the personal narrative of Jack Flowers to make them real, and he has a vocation for this generous art of bringing the flattest, most misrepresented men and women to life. In a beautifully told passage, he watches a skin-flick, teasing out the impoverished biographies of the actors as they go through the distasteful, impersonal routine of fellatio.

Flowers's writing is his own. His wisdom gets mixed up with bullshit, his vanity leads him to high-sounding epigrams which don't quite fit the case. Intelligence for him is largely a matter of knowing what the form is—how much to tip a lift-boy, how to deal with a difficult feller. He's "crazy about Joyce", but Joyce is not really the thing for Singapore. What saves him is the fact that, as he says, "all writing, even the clumsy kind, exposes in its loops and slants a yearning deeper than intention." His own yearning comes through sharp and clear, an essential charity and attentiveness which transcends all the malarkey of the Bandung's resident jokester and raconteur. At its best, his style is full of the wonder that comes from being exact, of telling everything with respect for its own rhythm and detail—the prose of a watchful lover. He remembers a stormy trip across the bay:

> We were towing a forty-foot lighter, the sort used for transporting bales of raw rubber; Chinese decorations were painted on the bow, evil white and black eyes, green whiskers and a red dragon-fanged mouth. The painted face with its scabrous complexion of barnacles rose and fell, gulping ocean, and the canvas cover, a vast pup-tent pitched over the lighter, was being lashed by the wind; our tow-rope, now loose as the lighter leaped at us, now tight as it plunged and dragged, was periodically wrung of water, which shot out in a twist of bubbly spray as it stretched tight. A grommet on the corner of the canvas tarp tore free, and the tent-fly burst open, unveiling our cargo, twenty-three smartly dressed Chinese and Malay girls, their scared white faces almost luminous in the gloom of the quaking shelter; they were huddled on crates and kegs, their knees together, holding their plastic handbags on their heads.

This is wonderful writing; nothing is faked or slurred over. It can take tropical storms and plastic handbags in its stride; it has an easy reverence for the world. In it, there is always room for the parenthesis, the missed detail, the additional fact, but—unlike so much "realistic" prose—it is never broken by the world which it records. Its poetic truthfulness, sustained against all odds in a society that is vicious, vain and chronically dishonest, makes even Singapore a place fit for saints to live in.

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On Nadezhda Mandelstam

A Voice in the Silence

By Milovan Djilas

IT IS A LONG-STANDING but still current belief that out of the totality of suffering under totalitarian régimes there will eventually emerge new forms of art, a new conscious understanding of mankind, of society and power, of classes and nations, of ideas and personalities. In actual fact, more often than not it is Literature which is under consideration, viewed as a synthetic expression both of reflective thought and of sensibility. Nevertheless, no literary (or other) works of an epoch-making nature have yet actually appeared, despite the fact that there is no lack of documentation and analysis. The artists and thinkers of Eastern Europe (including, of course, the Soviet Union) are nowadays neither shut off nor threatened to such an extent as to make it impossible for them to express themselves, albeit with a certain risk and, where necessary, outside their own native lands.

It would seem that Art and Philosophy need only a minimum of their "own" native soil, their "own" environment; they also, apparently, emerge as a result of individual and quite unforeseeable impulses. But what meaning today, in a world which is rapidly becoming no more than a village, can be attached to "own" native soil and "own" environment? George Orwell was English and wrote long before Solzhenitsyn. Undoubtedly totalitarian régimes are brought into being by the action of definite forces and certain national and other conditions, but not outside or completely contrary to the rest of the world. Tyranny has always existed, but totalitarianism is a world-wide modern phenomenon which is made possible only by complex and irresistible inner forces and tensions.

Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (published in the Soviet Union in 1962) is incontestably almost the only succinct account of the lower depths reached in the methodical reduction of human beings to the status of domestic animals in Stalin's camps. But with this work the publication inside the Soviet Union of material dealing with the themes of the Purges and the Camps came to a full stop. Since that time in the West there have appeared a large number of literary works and even more first-hand accounts; and very recently, the two volumes of the memoirs of Nadezhda Mandelstam[1] (the wife of Osip Mandelstam, the talented and significant poet, who died in a camp in 1938) have been published in Russian. The crumbling edifice of totalitarianism has long since been unable to restrain such bold spirits, even less to hold back life itself.

It is not enough to say that these books by Nadezhda Mandelstam are among the most shattering first-hand accounts ever written of suffering and violence. Above all else, the books make up a work both of complex structure and of exceptional poetic and intellectual force.

THE FIRST BOOK in the main keeps to the chronology of the persecution and suffering of Nadezhda's husband during the 1930s, whereas the second portrays individual events which were of significance to his life and creative writing, from the Revolution almost up to the present day. But the books are very similar, both in the manner of their exposition and in the themes which they present. They give a selective, analytical account of events and situations, and a spiritual and literary sketch of post-Revolutionary Russia. They are the outcry of an unhappy, exceptionally intelligent and highly educated woman. They document the black depths of immeasurable and unjustifiable violence, and echoes of torments and patient suffering beyond the comprehension of reason and which only the human species is capable of inflicting. Every cell, every atom of Nadezhda Mandelstam's being is saturated with misery and grief. But this did not poison or darken her mind but rather illuminated it; it

[1] The first volume, *Recollections* (*Vospominanija*), was published by the Chekhov Publishing Corporation (New York, 1970), and the second, *The Second Book* (*Vtoraya kniga*), by the YMCA Press (Paris, 1972). In the English version, the first book, translated by Max Hayward, is called *Hope Against Hope* (Harvill Press, London; Atheneum, New York; 1970), and the second, which has not yet appeared, *Hope Abandoned*. Quotations from both are reproduced here by kind permission of Mr Hayward and Harvill Press.

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calmed her anger and aroused her capacity for thought. The time of saints and martyrs is not past. One can only hope that it will not have to last until there are no more human beings.

NADEZHDA MANDELSTAM's books are only indirectly about the camps. They tell of—they think of—life "in freedom." But that life is made up of oppression and privation in many forms, and especially of uncertainty, which is even more terrible than the living death of the camps. Still, Nadezhda suffered too much and is too intelligent not to understand that "Stalinism" was not an episode or an "error", but a breakthrough and a transformation of a certain type of society.

These are not books of the defeated—they are books of the uncompromised, of the uncompromising, those who never accepted violence and unanimity of thought. For this reason alone they became "superfluous."

The Mandelstams were not against the Revolution: but it neither intoxicated nor corrupted them. I believe they were well disposed towards it, if only as a kind of cutting away of decayed flesh. In the second book Nadezhda recalls the mass homage at Lenin's lying-in-state as the last flicker of a people's revolution. The Mandelstams undoubtedly could not come to terms with post-Revolutionary bureaucratic and dogmatic restrictions. They were the kind of intellectuals and artists who cannot submit to any régime for the simple reason that their critical attitude and apartness serve as a defence for their visions and are the prerequisite of their creative abilities. Most of the romantic poets were like this—as are many contemporary thinkers, Bertrand Russell, Albert Camus, Leszek Kolakowski, Jean-Paul Sartre. But whereas these spirits might well be intransigent towards any régime, it is only totalitarian régimes which the Mandelstams, shut off within their own visions and artistic innovations, cannot endure, since such régimes combine an "infallible" scientific dogma with tyrannical power. Nadezhda's narrative reveals how closely linked to the Stalinist establishment of terroristic total power was the development and intensification of her own and Osip's mute and total suffering. There is perhaps no tragedy here, for tragedy must contain a measure of reason and sense. But personal misfortune is depicted and symbolised by misfortune on a national scale.

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There is none of the helplessness of individuals subjected to terror, or the insane delight in terror and the panic-stricken bewilderment when confronted with it. And just as "Stalinism" could not have arisen anywhere but in post-Revolutionary Russia, the Mandelstams would not have suffered anywhere but in Stalin's realm, in those lands subjected to Stalin's apparatus.

YET IN NADEZHDA'S ACCOUNT this suffering acquires another remarkable characteristic. It becomes at the same time a love poem, a "poem" as persistent as the realities of life in countries of political persecution, but which no one until now had composed in such a succinct way, or incorporated with such spontaneity into the whole picture of political and cultural events. Nadezhda shared with her husband the loneliness of "exile", right up to the time he was taken away to prison and concentration camp. She had also accompanied him earlier, during his European wanderings and journeys. She has continued to accompany him after his death, even more faithfully and consistently.

HERE WAS a poet of Jewish origin who wrote in Russian, a language which he enriched with deepened meanings and with elegant and subtle associations. Nadezhda—helped and sustained by that fearless and celebrated poet, Anna Akhmatova—hid Osip's manuscripts and copied, memorised, and then reproduced his texts. She took it upon herself as her sacred duty to save the poet's work and, with his work, his name; and she watched and worked to this end for more than twenty years. She devoted all her mature years to this task. This is what she lived for. During the nights filled with fear she would be interrupted by the noise of a car—would it stop in her street or pass on?—or by the expectation of a ring at the door of her flat.

The "superfluous", the liquidated poet is not published in the Soviet Union, even today. But Osip's works have nevertheless appeared recently in the West. Nadezhda has been set free from the burden of her life's vow, and with it from the fear for her own fate. Only then was she able to dedicate herself to her own literary work. In her youth she had studied painting, but then she was obliged to take up something "more practical" and she took a doctorate in English language, and spent a good deal of time as a teacher. But she had another profession—the role of a camp wife. This is what makes up the Dante-like tragedy of her poem. She remained faithful to her unfinished life with Osip, the kind of life between passionate, intelligent and unconforming people which creates itself from ecstasies and quarrels, from petty betrayals and naïve intrigues, from mad creeds and inspired flashes of genius.

Fearing that they might throw her into a camp and, possibly, set Osip free, she wrote a letter on 22 October 1938 and kept it for him:

Osia, my beloved, faraway sweetheart!

I have no words, my darling, to write this letter which you may never read, perhaps. I am writing it into empty space. Perhaps you will come back and not find me here. Then this will be all you have left to remember me by.

Osia, what a joy it was living together like children—all our squabbles and arguments, the games we played, and our love. Now I do not even look at the sky. If I see a cloud, who can I show it to?

Remember the way we brought back provisions to make our poor feasts in all the places where we have pitched our tent like nomads? Remember the good taste of bread when we got it by a miracle and ate it together? And our last winter in Voronezh. Our happy poverty, and the poetry you wrote. I remember the time we were coming back once from the baths, when we bought some eggs or sausage, and a cart went by loaded with hay. It was still cold and I was freezing in my short jacket (but nothing like what we must suffer now: I know how cold you are). That day comes back to me now. I understand so clearly, and ache from the pain of it, that those winter days with all their troubles were the greatest and last happiness to be granted us in life.

My every thought is about you. My every tear and every smile is for you. I bless every day and every hour of our bitter life together, my sweetheart, my companion, my blind guide in life.

Like two blind puppies we were, nuzzling each other and feeling so good together. And how fevered your poor head was, and how madly we frittered away the days of our life. What joy it was, and how we always knew what joy it was.

Life can last so long. How hard and long for each of us to die alone. Can this fate be for us who are inseparable? Puppies and children, did we deserve this? Did you deserve this, my angel? Everything goes on as before. I know nothing. Yet I know everything—each day and hour of your life are plain and clear to me as in a delirium.

You came to me every night in my sleep, and I kept asking what had happened, but you did not reply.

In my last dream I was buying food for you in a filthy hotel restaurant. The people with me were total strangers. When I had bought it, I realised I did not know where to take it, because I do not know where you are.

When I woke up, I said to Shura: "Osia is dead." I do not know whether you are still alive, but from the time of that dream, I have lost track of you. I do not know where you are. Will you hear me? Do you know how much I love you? I could never tell you how much I love you. I cannot tell you even now. I speak only to you, only to you. You are with me always, and I who was such a wild and angry one

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and never learned to weep simple tears—now I weep and weep and weep.
It's me: Nadia. Where are you?
Farewell.
Nadia.[2]

IN THE CAMP Osip Mandelstam was finished off by cold, hunger and exhaustion. The letter remained with Nadya who kept it and lived by it. And she donated it to our universal treasury—for those who love, and those who believe, and those who fight for legality and liberty.

BUT THIS INTIMATE THEME of Nadezhda's memoirs is only at first sight the most moving of all. No less moving, and certainly more profound, are her observations concerning the régime under which she had to love and live, and about the people with whom she shared a destiny.

It is a life and a society to all intents and purposes ordered, even convinced that it is ordered, by logical "scientific" methods, but in fact deprived of all rationality and sincerity. It is an absolute truth and a scientific method which have been transformed, once in power, into a kind of total violent madness. The life and ideas of Nadezhda Mandelstam—incidentally not unlike, to a large extent, my own—experienced and progressed through conditions in which "consciousness was turned inside out." That is to say, ideology was transformed into an inverted world or rather into an asocial community and an asocial personality.

> Our encounter with the irrational forces that so inescapably and horrifyingly ruled over us radically affected our minds. Many of us had accepted the inevitability—and some the expediency—of what was going on around us. All of us were seized by the feeling that there was no turning back—a feeling dictated by our experience of the past, our forebodings about the future and our hypnotic trance in the present. I maintain that all of us—particularly if we lived in the cities—were in a state close to a hypnotic trance. We had really been persuaded that we had entered a new era, and that we had no choice but to submit to historical inevitability, which in any case was only another name for the dreams of all those who had ever fought for human happiness. Propaganda for historical determinism had deprived us of our will and the power to make our own judgments. We laughed in the faces of the doubters, and ourselves furthered the work of the daily press by repeating its sacramental phrases, by spreading rumours about each new round of arrests ("that's what passive resistance leads to!") and finding excuses for the existing state of affairs. The usual line was to denounce history as such: it had always been the same, mankind had never known anything but violence and tyranny. . . .[3]

[2] *Vtoraya kniga* (*Hope Abandoned*), pp. 694-695.
[3] *Hope Against Hope* (*Vospominaniya*), p. 44.

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This is not the world which Kafka discovered or in which he firmly believed, but a world which has become Kafka-esque. It is a world in which one's own times were considered free and fortunate if the presentation of petitions or complaints was not regarded as a criminal offence. It is a world in which even Boris Pasternak's wife was constrained to state as a mother: "Most of all my children love Stalin—and after that me. . . ."

It is a world in which denunciation became something perfectly understandable, if not even inevitable, as a natural part of life.

> We lived in a world where people were always being "hauled in" and asked for information about our thoughts and feelings . . . only Zoshchenko refused . . . some suspected that everybody they met was an informer, others that they might be taken for one. . . . We all became slightly unbalanced mentally—not exactly ill, but not normal either. . . .[4]

It was a régime under which poets would voluntarily stay all night with their colleagues to ensure that no "enemy poem" could be destroyed in the interval between the police at the door-bell and the raid. There, to paraphrase Nadezhda, many still uncounted millions were deprived not only of life but even of death. They died without names and without graves, numbed and senseless from what they had endured, or destroyed as being of no progressive social value.

NADEZHDA MANDELSTAM is not writing mere history or sociological analysis, but both one and the other, as can be seen even in her laceratingly poetic meditations. Nadezhda's life followed its course in accordance with the development of Soviet society, from the Revolution through Stalinism to Brezhnev. The ancient Greeks identified wisdom with suffering: here suffering becomes wisdom. From the disasters of Nadezhda's life and ordeals, her mind was enriched and a new consciousness, a new perception of the world came to be formed.

But Nadezhda Mandelstam knows, more keenly and more profoundly than those who persecuted her (and than those who now menace her), that it was not everyone, not even the majority who suffered as she and Osip did. The Russian tragedy of Stalinist violence is a result of the fact that there were many who were on the side of illegality and evil, and the majority—almost everyone—submitted and were silent.

> "Unanimity" came about not as a consequence of bribery or intimidation. Terror works only when people are impressed by the very idea of it; bribes can only be placed in outstretched palms and unanimity, by the same token, is only possible when people are ready to abandon independence of thought in order to enjoy the feeling of being surrounded by the like-minded.[5]

Much the same thing can be said for Russian, for Soviet literature. It has earned its unenviable role by helping illegality, in one way or another, over a period of several decades, and by forcing the most creative writers right up to the present day to become internal émigrés. It is just because this régime was not (and has not even today become) the régime of a minority that it deceived and brought about the downfall of the majority itself. By understanding this, Nadezhda was able to elevate her own and Osip's suffering to the level of an all-Russian, and perhaps even a universal, tragedy.

THIS FEARSOME RÉGIME of a deluded, erring, and cowed majority did not come about by chance nor did it remain static. From revolutionary enthusiasm it moved to total violence and has now reached the stage of bureaucratic conservatism, that of an ossified reaction. But the life of the individual—Nadezhda's life—remains the same and unaltered. The historical phases and changes of the Soviet régime are the alternations of nightmares and phantoms to Nadezhda's innocence and insight. Nadezhda does not reject change, especially "change for the better." But she knows, as she remarks with an anxious detachment, that the essence has not changed and is not soon going to become something different. The régime as a whole, unreal in its derangement and real in its force and deception, is continuously reflected in Nadezhda's suffering meditations. There will not be, at least for the time being in

[4] *Hope Against Hope*, pp. 86-88.
[5] *Vtoraya kniga* (*Hope Abandoned*), p. 450.

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Russia, very many who will find joy or comfort in Nadezhda's account. Truthful about herself and Osip, she had no reason to be servile or accommodating to others: in her words speak an epoch and the people of an epoch. No doubt many will reject the truth of one or another detail. I, too, have tried; and I did not overlook that people are happiest to forget, and that they can easily justify sins against their beliefs, against their conscience. But those who attack Nadezhda Mandelstam should know that she has already forgiven them all. Capable of so much, she is not capable of forgetting or of being silent about the truth: and this is not only for the sake of those who have been or who are, but for those who are still to come and who have to know.

But a first-hand account must be a source-book of contemporaries: Nadezhda's book is a poetic eulogy of a small number of Russians, a few famous individuals who overcame fear and life. The poet Anna Akhmatova, with all her weaknesses and fantasies, grows into a heroic, wise figure of Russia and of modern history. Here, too, is Boris Pasternak with his enthusiasms and eccentricities, his talent and his piety. And Bukharin, right up to the time when he himself was threatened. . . . But alas, such people can be counted on one's fingers.

Nadezhda's memories are overshadowed by an endless number of villains, from paid informers to murderers, even unto the highest spheres of power and intellect. Who are they? Representatives of the masses, of the collective society? Mere servile trimmers of a totalitarian ideology? Violent characters seeking to identify themselves with Nation and Class?

THE MASS OR COLLECTIVE MAN is a composite, faceless being. Such a creature is possible only where society has been destroyed and the oppressed individual is cut off from his community. "Collective Man" is an ideological fiction, in actual fact a being deprived of both collectivity and individuality. For only the individual, only subjective, individual man can be collective: he is this by his very belonging to nation and class. But even though today, like it or not, the significance of the individual and his classic individuality must be stressed, this should not lead to the conclusion that a return should be made to "individualism" as a philosophy; only that individuality must be guarded and maintained if there is to be any kind of national progress and social stability. For it is under totalitarian, ideological rule, which destroys society by making it "conflictless" and "perfect", and reduces man to the level of a domestic animal by regarding him as the "highest form" of ape, treating him as a means to its "ideal" end, that class and national factors have continued to smoulder and to manifest themselves. The schismatics persist, that "mysterious tribe which survives despite all the laws of history and logic. . . ."[6]

NADEZHDA MANDELSTAM'S WORK is made more acute by its unerring and desperate irony, that irony which is the characteristic refinement of her Hebraic tradition but which also shows the inventiveness of an agile mind. In this spirit I understand her identification of the Soviet régime with the "Thousand-year Tsardom". But I would wish to add this: who can know how long such a régime can last? One thing seems to me to be certain: Nadezhda Mandelstam's book is perhaps the most tragic book of our time and will long outlive the millennial rulers—possibly because it is the work of a poet-thinker, and not of an ideologue or a politician. This kingdom too will pass. Its imperial power will give way in historical time, but its terror should not be forgotten. It is this act of remembrance that Nadezhda Mandelstam is striving for:

> People were then being killed so casually and on such a scale that nobody had time for tears or words of sympathy. From the beginning of the thirties, it became customary to vilify those who perished, so there was no longer any question of shedding a tear for them.[7]

Nadezhda Mandelstam's work is an act of reason and truth, and therefore in its way an act of judgment, not a punitive one but punishing for all that. Clearly it was just those people who were the most concerned about the fate of the régime who brought it to its final absurd consequences. The comparison of the Russian with the French Revolution is, in my view, untenable; the first was a process of organic West European development and the second a matter of an ancient retardation. Difficult though it may be, it is necessary to get away from the idea of two great turning-points, the 18th of Thermidor and the XXth Congress, or that two classically revolutionary dramas were determined by the different doings of the Robespierres and the Stalins.

[6] *Vtoraya kniga*, p. 568.
[7] *Vtoraya kniga*, p. 103.

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Can a Nadezhda Mandelstam ever emerge as a victor? Would not indeed a victory for her be a kind of defeat, a most terrible punishment? "I only desire to remain a human being at the moment of ultimate suffering."[8] She was just that, and it is for this that Russia and the world will remember her.

T. S. ELIOT observes somewhere that the emergence of a great writer disturbs the existing order of all writers before him. I would add that every appearance of a truly artistic work poses anew the question: what is art? So it is with Nadezhda Mandelstam's work.

But my admiration for both the person and the literary record would be in shadow and remain only half stated if I did not also point out certain differences; and it is not even of importance whether they are significant divergences in our points of view. But surely it is, above all, just that observance and respect of differences which is vital to the development of new thought and of other relationships, of a new moral sensibility, which Nadezhda and I, I have no fear or shame in stating, already share.

Firstly, God and universal Christian love. I do not believe in either, but not because I would consider the first transitory or prejudiced, and would reject the second. I am a believer, but not in any traditional or indeed in any form of religious, supra-human, extra-cosmic forces. But I believe. Yet is there any sense in expressing, in formulating the belief, if it is not to be the beginning of some new proselytising or "utopian-ising" faith? I believe in conscience and ideas, both capable of improving or at least of changing unendurable relationships. What gives us a guarantee that any new god would not, taken in conjunction with the known and accepted divinities and faiths, arouse new and cruel divisions among people? It may be good and necessary for church and state to be in accord; but for one's faith, for people, it is surely better if it is a personal question of individuals and their various religious communities. At least for me this is confirmed by the religious wars of the past and the demented frenzy of contemporary pseudo-religious ideologies. Nadezhda Mandelstam bore witness to the power and beauty of heresy, and I take note of that. I too belong to the camp of the heretics, at least with regard to the faithful of a "scientific" ideological orthodoxy. But at the same time Nadezhda Mandelstam emphasises Christianity because she is evidently inspired by the spirit of a universal Christian love. Universal love, yes!—but why should it be Christian? Is Buddhist or Islamic love worthless and non-universal? Should only that which is indisputable in one single—and always one's own—religion be acceptable? Christian love, in so far as it applies to revelation and universality, barely extended beyond the area of the Roman Empire and, later, of European civilisation. Even in these areas it was not everywhere interpreted in the same way because it cannot be understood or maintained outside the institutions of the various divided churches. The wise and tragic Nadezhda Mandelstam observes the prophetic and universal force of Dostoevsky, without forgiving him nevertheless his anti-Catholicism. This is where the differences between us begin, less because Dostoevsky's concept of the World and of Man is religious and old-fashioned, than because his "universality" is essentially Russian. The world has suffered more than enough (and many, in Russia most of all, are still suffering) because of "Marxist-Leninist" universality, im-

[8] *Vtoraya kniga*, p. 103.

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planted in Russia and bolstered up by "Russian" forces. It is to be feared that some new religious "universal love" could become a new way of spreading the power and influence of a most dangerous (and not yet disintegrating) empire. For what could it do with men who want a different universal, or even a religion of their own, or their own idea of love? A common humane language and mutuality can only be created today outside absolute values.

FOR MYSELF, I do not consider that mankind, particularly its "Western" breed (to which in a broad sense Russia also belongs) is becoming dehumanised or is being threatened with self-destruction by an atomic war or by the fatal pollution of the environment. What is humanism or "humanisation", if under these headings is meant any kind of groupings of values outside the extension of the human condition to which belongs, in the first instance (just because it is Man who is under scrutiny), the possibility of freedom? Mankind, "Eastern" and "Western", has never been human in the sense of a deep coincidence of religious and philosophical ideals. Such ideals moved people and will move them now; but can their possible, materialised achievements ever coincide with the ideal?

So it will remain, so it must be, otherwise civilised creativity would be extinguished and the human race die out. Has the world not always been "bad" for those who desired to explain it or change it? Then let it remain so in order that mankind through its most talented and fearless spirits be conscious of realities and try to change them. Mankind, I am convinced, is not capable of destroying itself. It did not create itself and cannot will its end. I am not saying that all the hydrogen bombs do not have the power of vast annihilation. Is anyone sufficiently mad to make use of them? Will anyone ever make use of such power? This, perhaps, is already a kind of faith. Even so, it is my persuasion, for I do not regard man as god-like. I simply consider that we have to turn towards man (man with a small "m"), that is, to real individual persons and not to symbols and abstractions, not to a God-man or a Man-god. It almost seems to me sufficient if we oppose ourselves—if we are no longer capable of rendering them powerless—to those who in the name of certain ideal aims would resort to weapons of mass annihilation.

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FINALLY, greetings and congratulations to Nadezhda Mandelstam. Dear Nadezhda, no one, at least to my knowledge, has ever spoken so authentically and profoundly about human fear as you have. I can only conclude that you have overcome fear. As in all martyrs, in you has been found something greater, perhaps even more worthy than life. Evidently the only thing that still leaves you in fear and trembling is the hypodermic needle, lest by means of some foul drug they should poison your will and force you to recant and retract and deny yourself. That, too, is just what I was afraid of in prison: and, like you, of that alone. But no. They do not resort to that any more, not because they themselves have changed but because they know that the Régime —what a strange word for the most total evil and a most elevated ideal!—has not confirmed itself as perfect, not even in the eradication of "alien" ideas and "superfluous" social and ethnic groups. Truth is indestructible and has again broken through the totalitarian darkness. It is your work, your books which protect you; they cannot be retracted or denied; it is already the whole world for you. You have fulfilled your duty towards Osip, Russia, and mankind; and above all, to yourself.

Going home

(*for Douglas Dunn*)

Why we died
Remains a mystery
Though without moral content.

The recipes, rhyming slang
And archaic ailments
Of a foreclosed species—

Only a misleading fraction
Will survive on file
To show we could crack a smile.

Only an unrepresentative sample
Will persist on tape
To show what we meant by hope.

Extraordinary people
We were in our time, how we
Lived in our time

As if blindfold
Or not wholly serious,
Inventing names for things

To propitiate silence.
It is silence we hug now
In the indigestible

Dawn mist which clings
All afternoon
To the south shore of the Humber;

For ours is the afterlife
Of the unjudgeable,
Of the desolate and free

Who come over
Twice daily from Hull
Disguised as shift-workers

And vanish for ever
With a whisper of soles
Under a cindery sky—

The sort of sky
That broke the hearts
Of the foundered legionaries.

Like them we are
Spirits here
With our lunch-boxes and

Papers of manumission,
Our speechless debarkations
Without zest or issue.

A pale light wanes
At the pierhead
As if to guide us home

To the blank Elysium
Predicated on our
Eschewal of metaphysics,

A sunken barge rots
In the mud beach
As if finally to discredit

A residual poetry of
Leavetaking and homecoming,
Of work and sentiment;

For this is the last
Homecoming, the end
Of the rainbow.

And the pubs are shut.
There are no
Buses till morning.

Derek Mahon

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LETTERS

"Painted Grapes or Real Grapes"?

THERE IS ONE POINT in Professor Laurence Lerner's interesting article on realism ["Stendhal's Mirror", ENCOUNTER, December 1972] that I would like to comment on. This is the argument in Mr Bateson's book about the reader being uncertain whether he is looking at "painted grapes or real grapes". Professor Lerner challenges Mr Bateson's assertion that it is a flaw for the novel to depend on autobiography, and I am sure Professor Lerner is right to say that fiction can be plausible or truth unconvincing.

What strikes me is that both Mr Bateson and Professor Lerner are avoiding—perhaps deliberately?—an important implication of the "grapes" problem for realism. In painting, there is the possibility of confusing an artefact with reality. Painting depends on the visual sense to be perceived; it affects our vision in the same way as does reality visually perceived. It can compete with reality, therefore, under certain circumstances; where we do not expect reality to carry auditory or olfactory or tactile sense information. Literature, on the other hand, can hardly be considered to reproduce reality in this way; making it perceptible in the same medium as the reality it imitates. Literature is perceived through the medium of language, and could thus only be confused with reality, if that reality were linguistic. (I leave aside the problem of superficial credibility, where we may be as suspicious of the bound and printed word as of the framed and painted canvas.) Hence we may only expect literature to imitate reality when it reproduces speech, writing, or thought.

Perhaps, ultimately, this is as pointless an objection to the possibility of realism as is the objection that reality cannot be totally grasped, far less totally expressed. But I think it is an important qualification to add to these two arguments; that even in so far as it is grasped and expressed, the expression of it in language reproduces reality in a totally different medium from the one it exists in. To this extent it is a nonsense to talk of literature being realistic about action or physical objects.

But I do not produce this argument merely to be destructive, for there is the other side of the coin. If we move from the problem of perceiving reality, to that of expressing it, it is apparent that language is the total human medium for expressing our perceptions, and it can contain and allude to all other sensory perceptions, in a way that no other single faculty can. Here is the superiority of literature over painting. It can evoke visual images, whereas painting can only approximate to conveying thought by crude and laborious symbols. Only if we are prepared to posit a system of human thought independent of language can we say that literature cannot be realistic.

P. J. COLLIER

School of European Studies,
University of Sussex

Tocqueville's America

WHAT DOES Mr Niel Hirschson (ENCOUNTER, March, p.92) mean when he suggests that Tocqueville, writing about America, found it necessary to "give lip-service to prevailing doctrinal attitudes", and that "Even today many people are under the impression that his *Democracy In America* is an immaculate praise of the US"?

Either Mr Hirschson or his "many people"—or both—cannot have read *Democracy in America* very attentively. His allegations are a gross slur on the work of a great man. Tocqueville conscientiously set down his worked-for, honest, and pondered views on what was good and bad in democracy and in America. Sometimes he found it hard to make up his mind, and veered between praise and censure. But the views he put forward were in all cases his own, though of course they were often those of other people as well. It was to his honesty that he owed much of his success. He certainly did not win it by pandering to people with whose opinions he disagreed. I defy Mr Hirschson to document what seems to be his contrary contention with a single instance.

HUGH BROGAN

St. John's College,
Cambridge

S. M. Lipset's Reply

MR ROOTES' [ENCOUNTER, April, "Lipset's Ideology and No End"] puts me doubly on the defensive, since I am supposed to defend myself against, among other things, the charge that I have been too concerned with defending myself. I suppose the only effective answer to that charge in this case would be to decline the Editor's request that I rebut.

He and I clearly read the views of Barrington Moore differently. As I read him he wrote:

> " . . . as we reduce economic inequalities and privileges, we may also eliminate the sources of contrast and discontent that put drive into genuine political alternatives. . . . Once the idea has been achieved, or is even close to realisation, the driving force of discontent disappears, and a society settles down for a time to a stolid acceptance of things as they are. Something of the sort seems to have happened in the United States."

My main objection to Mr Rootes' comments is that he seeks to force me into a one-dimensional univariate level of analysis. He criticises my emphasising the multivariate complexity of political and other behaviour; that is, any modifications of what he takes to be my main theme are unreal.

He also seeks to put words from one aspect of my writing into another. I never remotely attempted to equate the term Ideology with "false consciousness" either in recent or past writings. I wrote that Engels—and Marx—did.

By simply quoting me as saying "democracy . . . is the good society itself in operation," Mr Rootes tries to fool his readers into believing my conception of democracy is limited to its Western forms. That sentence was immediately followed by:

"Only the give-and-take of a free society's internal

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struggles offers some guarantee that the products of the society will not accumulate in the hands of a few power-holders, and that men may develop and bring up their children without fear of persecution."

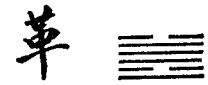
What I have reiterated in many writings is my belief that the non-power-holding strata can only defend themselves from the power-holders by their capacity to resist the efforts of dominant strata to institutionalise power for themselves and their families. I explained this in detail in the "Introduction" to the Anchor

In the Margin:

I WAS PLEASED *to note that at least on this side of the Atlantic there were a few critical tones about that kind of trendy pretentiousness which seems to dominate so much of our Anglo-American cultural and intellectual life these days. I refer to Professor Alastair Buchan's critical remarks on the "silly superficial" aspects of Miss Frances Fitzgerald's much-acclaimed Viet Nam book, entitled* Fire in the Lake, *and especially to the devastating* T.L.S. *critique quoted in our "Life and Letters" column* [ENCOUNTER, *April, p. 97*]. *That basic political point about the Fitzgerald "Vietnik" school of thought must be reiterated—"it is sad how many liberals today have come to the conclusion, since decolonisation, that a collective, secretive and totalitarian society is 'the only thing natives understand'. . . ." This is—morally, ideologically—grave enough. And there are also, to be sure, many unscholarly misdemeanours, deriving from ignorance of the Vietnamese language and from the school-girl brazenness (fresh from Paul Mus' seminars in Paris) of telling us ethnocentric imperialists "all" about South East Asian culture and civilization based on those well-known anti-imperialist researches of the* French!

But I want to stress something else, the matter of intellectual style, for it was this that stopped me cold (I went on only with heavy heart and mind) on the very first printed page. The page is called modestly "Note on the Title" *and goes on immodestly to say that* "Fire in the Lake" *comes from the* I Ching, *the Chinese Book of Changes, "and it is the image of revolution." Is it? And what has the* I Ching *to do with Viet Nam? Has there ever been a Vietnamese edition of this old fortune-teller's classic? Titles of our books these days are a special contemporary affliction, but this one (how Sarah Laurentian can you get?) is really "sick". The* Note *goes on to quote at length—how impressive this must have appeared to those (evidently unlettered) literary judges who just awarded the US National Book Award to Miss Fitzgerald for her* Fire in the Lake—*from Dr Richard Wilhelm's Princeton University Press edition of the* I Ching. *Things were never as fancy and high-toned as this when we relied only on* Times *and* Time *reporters for a quick cable on the latest news from Saigon and the* DMZ.

SINCE MISS FITZGERALD *is now a prize-laden defender of the true and poetical image of Revolution in the world, shouldn't one take the trouble to look at her sources? She refers (on p. 27, Little-Brown, Boston; Macmillan, London) to the oracular meaning of the cryptic trigrams and broken lines in the original Chinese hexagram. It all looks like this:*



And they are rendered (in, mark it well, the English rendering by Cary F. Baynes of the German translation by Richard Wilhelm from the original Chinese) thus:

"Fire in the lake: the image of REVOLUTION.
Thus the superior man
Sets the calendar in order
And makes the seasons clear."

Whatever this may mean, it is a class of justification of the Viet Cong's revolutionary régime which we haven't had since the Christian fathers ceased to wage religious wars over the spelling of theological terms.

If one goes on to look at the German text, "revolution" in all its mellifluity becomes merely Umwälzung; *and that was itself a rather free Western rendering of* Ko *which is given as, of all things, "moulting (or:* die Mauserung*)." (See: Hellmut Wilhelm's Hong Kong lectures on the* I Ching, "Die Wandlung," *Zurich 1958, transl. by Cary Baynes as* Change, *Routledge, London 1961.)*

ORIGINALLY, FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH *(believe me: not much)* Ko—*or moulting—was used for the skin of an animal or a bird. In the commentary in James Legge's edition of* The I Ching: the Book of Changes *(1899; Dover Press, 1963; pp. 167-9), the "Ko Hexagram" is explained as follows:*

"The first line, undivided, shows its subject (as if he were) bound with the skin of a yellow ox. . . .
"The fourth line, undivided, shows occasion for repentance disappearing (from its subject). . . .
"The fifth line, undivided, shows the great man (producing his changes) as the tiger (does when he) changes (his stripes). . . .
"The sixth line, divided, shows the superior man producing his changes as the leopard (does when he) changes (his spots). . . ."

In a further comment by Legge, which can be found only in the Raymond Van Over edition of the I Ching *(Mentor, 1961, p. 252)*

". . . But how this application of the Great Symbolism really flows from it, I must confess myself unable to discover. Once, however, when I was conversing with a high Chinese dignitary, who was a well-read scholar also so far as his own literature was concerned, he referred to this paragraph [*i.e.* 49, "Ko"] as proving that all our western science had been known to Fu-hsi and Confucius!"

So this is as far as we can go if we ring all the changes on the I Ching—*clearly, as Miss Fitzgerald*

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paperback edition of *Political Man* in the following terms: "Only a politically democratic society can reduce the pressures endemic in social systems to increase the punitive and discriminatory aspects of stratification. I believe with Marx that all privileged classes seek to maintain and *enhance* their advantages against the desire of the underprivileged to reduce them. . . . This tendency is as true for the Soviet Union as it is for the United States. . . ."

What Fire, Which Lake?

has been selling us the Revolution, the central text for understanding all the main currents of our times.

THE STYLE IS THE WOMAN, *and the intellectual style is the intelligentsia. The jejune playfulness of the author of* Fire in the Lake *has a serious American lesson for us. Next time you see the moulting of the skin of an animal or a bird, or a tiger and a leopard changing stripes and spots, or the lovely flames of a fire licking away at the surface of your nearby lake, remember this (undivided) Eisenhoweresque line: Never commit your intellectual troops to the mainland of China. They're sure to get lost in the jungle.*

★

"Pragmatists" v. "the System"

A GOOD DEAL *of our recent discussion of "The Prospects of Socialism" from Professor Richard Lowenthal to Roy Jenkins to the Report from Germany* [ENCOUNTER, *February and May*] *revolves around the meaning—and the meaninglessness—of words. As such some of the developments in the whole European argument belong more properly as items in our "Life & Letters Today" column. Consider the two etymological high-points of the recent Social Democratic Party convention in Hanover where Willy Brandt won a resounding victory over the "New Left" (and half-totalitarian) elements in the extremes of his own movement.*

The refrain for years from the Far Left Marxian wing has been that liberal and democratic socialists are nothing but contemptible "pragmatists" *who accommodate themselves by patch-work reforms to a hated* "system." *These words have been repeated so often, so noisily, so angrily over the years that they have almost become a bit of standard revolutionary liturgy. Even the liberals and the socialists have frequently betrayed feelings of shame at being so "pragmatical" and not doing more to change "the System."*

At long last the challenge was met in Hanover. I listened to the brilliant speech of Hellmut Schmidt, possibly Willy Brandt's successor as the leader of German Socialism, in which he took on both concepts and engaged in a titanic "battle of words."

"Pragma", he pointed out, has to do with "doing", with action. It was first used in a modern sense by none other than Immanuel Kant ("pragmatisch") *and Kant intended it to refer to the performance of those deeds which serve moral purposes. Subsequently the philosophy of Pragmatism, as developed by the American philosophers William James and John Dewey, embraced the effective ethical relationship between means and ends. In other words, to be a pragmatist is not to wear a badge of shame—it is rather the proud title of one who measures the real value of ideas, values, and programmes by the actual results in society (and not by self-serving ideologies).*

As for "System", there was a note of anger and bitterness in Schmidt's voice as he (aged 52) addressed himself to the sloganeering New Left youth who couldn't remember "only yesterday." For this was Adolf Hitler's favourite word of contempt and hate for the Weimar Republic. "Das System" *was a Nazi phrase and concept, a shorthand sign for the totalitarian resentment against a mixed, liberal democratic order. Surely it has no place in the vocabulary of decent intellectual discourse.*

★

Stalin and Nechayev

THE *study of Dostoevsky's novel,* The Possessed, *by Joseph Frank* [ENCOUNTER, *March*], *made in my view a fundamental contribution to the clarification of certain traditions in Russian political thought. Despite the dissent which we will be publishing, it seemed to me to illuminate the "realistic" drama,* i.e. *the authentic historical dilemma, of the revolutionary mind which was so tortuously exhibited in that long letter from Michael Bakunin to Sergei Nechayev which Professor Michael Confino recently discovered* [ENCOUNTER, *July/August 1972*].

We can sense the relevance of it all to present-day ideology. But one newly-recorded fact is astonishing in its linkage of 19th-century and 20th-century revolutionary personalities.

In his recently published Let History Judge *(Macmillan, 1972), the distinguished (and, alas, persecuted) Soviet scientist, Roy Medvedev, also discusses Dostoevsky,* The Possessed, *Nechayev, and the whole problem of the degeneration of a revolution into a tyranny. He refers (p. 334) to an article written by a Russian historian named Kariakin which "draws an analogy between Stalin and Nechayev that has some validity." But this is, once again, literary analysis and political comparison. Then comes one previously unknown fact (p. 335), and it lights up the whole landscape like, as Trotsky used to say, lightning in a midnight storm.*

> **"Kariakin has also informed the author [*i.e.* Medvedev] of a suggestive fact: Nechayev's archive, thought to be lost, was returned to its place after 1953 [the year of Stalin's death], 'from Stalin's office'."**

So now we know that Stalin was indeed very close to Nechayev!

The extremes always seem to touch, somewhere.

M.J.L.

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Again:

> "If it is true, as I assume, that pressures toward inequality and status ascription are basic to human society, then it follows that those who would reduce such reactions as much as possible must seek for institutionalised means of restraining them. And I know of no means to do so which are superior to or even approach the method of conflict. . . . *The only effective restraint on the dominant class is counter-power*. The primary weapons of the lower strata, of the exploited classes, are the ability to organise, to strike, to demonstrate, and to vote rulers out of office."

This is what I mean by democracy as the "good society"—not "Western liberal democracy", but the institutionalisation of conflict, of opposition, under any socio-economic system. It is an argument present in several of my books of the 1950s down to an essay which will appear in *Sociological Inquiry* this spring. And some commentators (e.g. the British sociologist, G. Duncan Mitchell; the American political scientist, Andrew McFarland; and the Italian political scientist, Giovanni Sartori), in recent years have even described my work as reflecting a Marxist or neo-Marxist emphasis on "interest and conflict" or class-consciousness. Recently a review of (Lipset & Raab) *Politics of Unreason* in *Contemporary Sociology* (March 1972) made the same point. Lest Mr Rootes again misunderstands: I am not claiming to be a "Marxist" but rather noting that others recognise that my work emphasises "conflict."

When I bemoaned the shift among intellectuals from "Ideology to Sociology," what I meant was their loss of interest in class conflict, in the under-privileged strata, in favour of cultural criticism. Thus, in the concluding chapter to *The First New Nation* (published in 1963), I criticised "liberal intellectuals" for having "in fact deliberately turned away from a concern with economic betterment of the underprivileged. They now direct the bulk of their criticism at the quality of American culture." But such criticisms, while they may be warranted, "serve to deflect attention from the fact that for thirty to fifty million people, America is not an affluent society. . . ." This is still true, Mr Rootes. The "radical chic" American New-Left intellectual critics of the past seven years have had only contempt for the working class.

I could go on like this—but I wonder if it would really help with critics like Mr Rootes. For what they really object to in my writings is the conviction that those who believe in political "solutions", in socialist utopias, are the real élitists, the real exponents of a consensus society without struggle. No matter how many times I reiterate that the so-called good society will inevitably be one of struggle, of conflict, of opposition to governing élites, they somehow see a Conservative Consensus Theory. In my view, societies which concentrate power in the state, or in a governing party élite, are the real forms that ultra-Reaction takes in our era.

I am sorry to be so defensive, but what can you do with people who evidently read but refuse to recognise plain differences and make proper distinctions?

S. M. LIPSET

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AUTHORS

John Wain, novelist, poet and critic, is a frequent contributor to ENCOUNTER ("Dr Johnson as Poet", May 1972; "Desert Island Bible", June 1971; "Salade Niçoise", August 1970). He has recently been elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford. . . .

Alvin Toffler, author of *Future Shock* (New York, Random House; London, Bodley Head), has recently edited a symposium, *The Futurists,* gathering together essays from social critics, scientists and planners. He is now working on a study of man in the post-technological revolution. . . .

Ferdinand Mount's analysis of "The Sense of Dispossession" appeared in the December 1972 ENCOUNTER. He is Chief Leader Writer for the *Daily Mail,* and his most recent book, *The Theatre of Politics,* was published last year by Weidenfeld. . . .

John Bayley is Tutor and Lecturer in English at New College, Oxford, and the author, among other works, of *The Characters of Love, The Romantic Survival,* and *Tolstoy and the Novel.* . . .

Martin Dodsworth, editor of *The Survival of Poetry* (Faber, 1970), is Lecturer in English at Royal Holloway College, London. . . .

Malcolm Bradbury, author of the novels *Eating People is Wrong* and *Stepping Westward,* and of *Possibilities* (Oxford University Press), is Professor of American Literature at the University of East Anglia. . . .

Laurence Lerner is Professor of English at the University of Sussex. *Selves,* his most recent volume of poetry, was published by Routledge. . . .

Bernard Bergonzi, Professor of English at the University of Warwick, has just brought out a new collection of essays, *The Turn of a Century* (Macmillan). . . .

Emrys Jones is a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and the author of *Scenic Form in Shakespeare.* . . .

Peter Conrad is a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. His examination of the Victorian age, *The Victorian Treasure House,* has recently been published by Collins.

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Life & Letters Today

Hamburg

GALSWORTHY AGAIN: *Television is emerging as the major factor in the making of best-sellers in the German book-shops. The latest example is John Galsworthy's "Forsyte Saga". The television serial comes to German TV very late, years after the USA, Australia, and even Russia, and almost a decade after its filming in black-and-white by the BBC. Still, it is having a powerful pull. The novel was first published by Zsolnay in 1927, had a small sale, and was kept in print although it was selling only a few hundred copies each year. The TV-serial began in February. During the first week several thousand copies of Galsworthy were ordered in German bookshops. Zsolnay has now been rushing through extra printings, and the new best-seller has already sold 80 thousand copies.* DER SPIEGEL

Moscow

SPOCK-MARKED VICTORY: *A poem was published this week in the official Soviet party daily newspaper, "Pravda", from the pen of the poet Yevgeni Yevtushenko, which celebrated "the Victory" at the end of the hostilities in Viet Nam. Yevtushenko writes of the efforts of the Soviet proletariat to support the struggle of the Communists in Viet Nam and a number of foreigners are also mentioned as fighters for peace. The poem includes these lines:*

With victory, Viet Nam
The air on the front is now peaceful.
With victory, a world of friends
In the West as in the East,
with victory, Picasso,
with victory, Jane Fonda,
with victory, my Petka,
with victory, Doctor Spock.

Presumably, by "Petka" the poet means a reference to the Russian people.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London

UGLY WORDS: *David Lytton's commentary for* The Times of Printing House Square *(BBC 1) was couched in an extraordinary language. Thus William Howard Russell,* The Times' *famous war correspondent, was made to watch the Crimean disasters with "a cold Celtic eye." When Lord Northcliffe, "so gorged with printer's ink that he became the Napoleon of Fleet Street", bought the paper its staff "waited for the wind of tycoonery to buffet them." Munich was "perhaps the ugliest word in the 20th century."*

Well, I'll be Muniched [Peter Black writes] if I can understand why Lytton should have been allowed to turn this sort of thing against people who have done him no harm. DAILY MAIL

Paris

HOBBITER DICTA: The literary critic of yesterday's *Le Monde* takes to task the French translator of Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" for gallicising the names of the two heroes to Frondon and Bilbon.

Tolkien's work, he says, "is essentially English, its characters, its personages, its music are all English. Middle Earth never existed in Aquitaine."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

New York

VERBAL VITALITY: *The whorehouses of New York need a new name. The Mayor, Mr John Lindsay, has just signed a Bill making unlicensed "massage parlours" illegal. It comes into effect after 30 days, and in that short interval, the Mafia and the on-the-spot managers of this colossal business will unquestionably think of something else. Gymnasia, perhaps.*

In the meantime, the number of "Nude Photo Modelling" establishments is increasing, and the same girls, the same clients and the same managements continue to perform their accustomed roles. It is all very vexing for Mr Lindsay, who is trying to clean up New York, particularly the Times Square area, but is meeting with very little success.

The police do their best. They have special teams of detectives (known as "pussy posses") who mount drives against the girls. Little clouds of black streetwalkers, like blackbirds pursued by a cat, may be met fleeing from a patrol car, and most girls expect to be picked up three or four times a week.

The district is known as "Hell's Bedroom". The girls are called "hookers", and male impersonators who perform the same function are called "knobbers". To catch them, the police have a "knob squad". The vitality of the American language is one of the consolations of this depressing business.

THE TIMES

London

TRICKY DICKENS: In *The Pickwick Papers*, Ch. 43, Sam Weller observes to his father "... You've been a-prophesyin' away wery fine, like *a red-faced Nixon* as the sixpenny books gives picters on."

In view of this uncanny foresight, does it not seem that Sam himself was doing the prophesying?

THE GUARDIAN

New York

COWARDS ALL: *Sir Noel Coward's sometimes lusty sense of humour has proved too much for the Columbia Broadcasting Company's television network. Before approving a television presentation of "Oh Coward!" the successful musical based on his plays, songs and other writing, a special performance of which he attended last month, CBS officials insisted on certain modifications.*

In the song "Don't put your daughter on the stage" the lines "in addition to which, the son of a bitch," were changed to "What's driving me wild, the idiot child can neither sing nor dance."

In "Why do the wrong people travel?" a phrase in the lines "and they'll see Pompeii on the only day it's up to its ass in molten lava," was changed to "up to its ears."

In "Mrs Wentworth Brewster" the line "She cried 'Hooray, funiculi-funicula, funick yourself!' became "funiculi-funicula, fiddledee-dee!"

DAILY TELEGRAPH

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